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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab Affairs: Iraq's al-Sahhaf Confers With Arab League Chief

JN1503194996 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1815 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Mar (INA) — Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf met with Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid at the League's headquarters today.

INA's correspondent in Cairo said that al-Sahhaf and 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid discussed current Arab situation, joint Arab action, and ways to bolster Arab solidarity to serve the higher interests of the Arab nations.

The foreign minister briefed the Arab League secretary general on current relationship between Iraq and the UN Security Council, as well as Arab relations in general.

The Arab League secretary general stressed the importance of quickly easing the suffering of the Iraqi people to enable Iraq to play its role as an important and effective element in joint Arab action and as an extra power for the Arab nation.

The meeting was attended by Sa'd 'Abd-al-Majid al-Faysal, senior Foreign Ministry under secretary, and Dr. Nabil Najm, Iraq's permanent representative at the Arab League.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Musa, Jordan's al-Kabariti Discuss Arab, Bilateral Issues

NC1403141196 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1340 GMT 14 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 14 Mar (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and Jordanian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti held a meeting on the sidelines of the Arab League Council session in Cairo today. Their discussions were devoted to coordinating the Egyptian and Jordanian positions on current Arab issues.

Musa and al-Kabariti discussed ways of boosting the peace march along the Palestinian track, extending assistance—including financial aid—to the Palestinian people, and lifting the Israeli blockade of the Palestinian territories.

They also previewed the next meeting of the Egyptian-Jordanian Higher Joint Committee, which is due to be held in April.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Syria, Jordan Said To Differ on Summit Participation

MM1503123896 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 15 Mar 96 pp 1, 4

[Unattributed report: "Quarrel Between al-Shar' and al-Kabariti Over Syria's Position on Sharm al-Shaykh Summit"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, Amman, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — A Syrian-Jordanian disagreement cast a shadow on the meetings of the Arab League Council's 105th session yesterday. A quarrel took place between Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and Jordanian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti because of statements made by the latter that "Syria's nonparticipation in the Sharm al-Shaykh summit is a decision which conflicts with the strategy adopted by Damascus, which has chosen peace and agreed to negotiate for it."

Responding to these statements, Faruq al-Shar' said that "good preparations should have been made for the Sharm al-Shaykh summit through a preparatory committee."

He pointed out that the "political leadership in Syria studied all factors and concluded that it would be erroneous to participate in the summit, because Syria is still suffering from the occupation, although four years have elapsed since the Madrid conference."

Following his meeting with Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, al-Shar' added that Israel "continues to fabricate excuses to obstruct any progress in the peace process."

However, 'Amr Musa said: "We have said before that Syria's participation would have represented an addition to the summit and a good opportunity to present Syria's view." He added that Egypt and the other Arab states represented Syria at the Sharm al-Shaykh summit because Arab interests are the same when it comes to advancing the peace process, halting violence, continuing the peace process, and restoring the Arabs' rights.

There had been interpretations to the effect that al-Kabariti's statements meant that "Syria's nonparticipation in the 'Peacemakers Summit' portrays it as a supporter of terrorism," which prompted al-Shar' to announce his rejection of the statements; a disagreement erupted between him and al-Kabariti, so 'Amr Musa intervened to calm the situation. It was later agreed to hold a tripartite meeting of the Syrian, Lebanese, and Jordanian foreign ministers. The meeting lasted 45 minutes.

There were still signs of the disagreement after the meeting, as al-Shar' declined to comment on what had been discussed or the results reached, while al-Kabariti said that "the results of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit were reviewed," and that "Jordan considered the summit a suitable forum for the Arabs to put their view forward, even with regard to the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, because 29 world leaders participated in it." He added that "the Sharm al-Shaykh statement is balanced and is in the interests of the peace process." [passage omitted]

Inter-Arab Affairs: Al-Shar' Views Peacemakers Summit, Turkey

NC1503163796 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1505 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Mar (MENA)—Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', who is leading his country's delegation to the Arab League Council meetings, has denied any misunderstanding between Syria and Egypt. He said Syria's opinion of the Sharm al-Shaykh peacemakers summit is known.

Al-Shar' stressed that Syrian-Egyptian relations are firm, strong, and based on a good mutual understanding between the leaders of the two countries, especially between Presidents Husni Mubarak and Hafiz al-Asad.

On reports of a misunderstanding between Egypt and Syria, al-Shar' said in press statements: The Sharm al-Shaykh summit was hastily arranged; there was no preparation, preliminary meeting, or agenda. So Egypt and Syria did not hold the appropriate consultations. He stressed that Egyptian-Syrian relations were not, and will not be, affected.

On whether Syria is mediating between Egypt and Sudan following the recent visit to Damascus by Sudanese President 'Umar al-Bashir, al-Shar' said there is no Syrian mediation. He expressed his belief that relations between Egypt and Sudan must be the kind of relations that exist between two fraternal neighboring countries and that the two countries should resolve their differences directly and without foreign intervention. He said al-Bashir's visit to Syria was within this framework.

Asked about the water problem between Syria and Turkey, the Syrian foreign minister said: We in the Arab League Council have stressed the need for good neighborly relations between Turkey and Syria in particular and between Turkey and the Arabs in general. Noting that the Arab League Secretariat proposed a draft resolution denouncing Turkey, al-Shar' said: We do not want to denounce anyone. We want the best of relations with Turkey. We, therefore, call on Turkey to resolve this issue in accordance with international laws and conventions.

Al-Shar' expressed astonishment at media reports, or at interpretations by some Turkish officials, that Syria wanted the Arab League Council to condemn Turkey. He stressed that this is baseless.

He said the resolution the Council will issue calls for a final agreement on a fair distribution of Euphrates water among Turkey, Syria, and Iraq in accordance with international law.

He denied that the resolution contains any denunciation or condemnation of Turkey. He emphasized that Syria and Turkey are two neighboring countries linked by historical bonds. He added: Therefore, there is no condemnation. The aim of presenting the draft resolution to the Arab League is not to condemn Turkey, but, on the contrary, to ask for cooperation to resolve this issue so that the Euphrates River might serve as a bridge for cooperation between Syria and Turkey.

[In a related report Cairo MENA in Arabic at 1525 GMT on 15 March reports the following: "Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' left Cairo today after attending the Arab League Council meeting."]

Inter-Arab Affairs: Al-Shar' Defends Nonparticipation by Syria

JN1503183296 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1654 GMT 15 Mar 96

[Statement by Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' in Cairo on 14 March; from "The Week's Event" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] It would have been possible to prepare for the conference. It would have been possible to form a preparatory committee and give it enough time to realize the aims and what could result from the summit.

The Syrian leadership studied all the possibilities and facts — given that Syria suffers from Israeli occupation and that for more than four years Israel has used pretexts to prevent progress in the peace process and to avoid any decision on the issues cited on the talks' agenda. Therefore, the Syrian leadership decided not to participate.

I can also add that some of the Arab speeches at the Sharm al-Shaykh summit were good. They expressed the Arab position and, therefore, the Syrian Arab position as well. Our decision not to attend the conference was not because we feared that our Arab brothers would make unsatisfactory speeches or because we had doubts about their stands, never. Syria's nonparticipation in the conference was a result of patient study. Such a conference, given the circumstances in which it was held and the tense atmosphere that accompanied its convocation, serves Israel's interests but does not serve the interest of the Arabs.

We are certain that if the conference had been given enough time, if there had been in-depth discussions, and if objective opinions had been exchanged — and to reiterate our understanding and denunciation of terrorism, distinguishing between terrorism and nonterrorism, such as the struggle related to resisting the occupation — if all these issues had been given time to be threshed out by all the parties at the conference, then we would not have hesitated to participate.

We felt that the conference was convened too hastily to discuss a sudden development — even though the subject is very sensitive, and we are aware of this sensitivity. Syria has repeatedly denounced the killing of innocent people and has distinguished between fighting occupation and killing innocent people. If all these issues were very clear and if consultations had been held before the conference was convened, the results would have been better and the statement that was issued would have been more balanced.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Lebanese FM Cited on Terrorism, Occupation

NC1403191596 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1835 GMT 14 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 14 Mar (MENA)—Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz has asserted his country's readiness to participate in any action aimed at seriously putting an end to violence in the Middle East and based on the political causes of terrorism.

In statements on the sidelines of the 105th session of the Arab league Ministerial Council, he said Lebanon supports the comprehensive and just peace launched at the Madrid conference.

Asked why his country did not participate in the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, Buwayz said the conference came in the wake of violent events in Israel, while 15 percent of Lebanon's territories are occupied. Israel, he added, conducts daily air raids and shells Lebanese installations and its population.

He said he believes that terrorism is one thing and resisting the occupation of land by foreign forces is something else, which should have been distinguished.

Inter-Arab Affairs: UN's Butrus-Ghali on Peacemakers Summit, Iran

MM1503124696 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
15 Mar 96 p 5

[Report by Ashraf al-Faqiyy: "Ghali Tells AL-HAYAH: Sharm al-Shaykh Summit Will Not Impose Sanctions on Iran"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo — UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali has played down Syria's and Lebanon's nonparticipation in the "Peacemakers Summit" in the Middle East, whose proceedings concluded in Sharm al-Shaykh in Egypt the day before yesterday. He told AL-HAYAH that "eight Arab states did not participate in this summit, so why focus on Syria and Lebanon?" Asked whether the prevailing atmosphere after the summit indicates that Iran will be subject to Security Council sanctions in view of the accusations of sponsoring terrorism made against it, he said: "No, I do not think so."

Ghali added: "The summit was open to all parties, and its results are of special importance because it was the first Arab-Israeli meeting on such a scale and at such a level in which all participants announced their adherence to the peace process in the Middle East."

Ghali declined to associate terrorism with Islam, saying: "Terrorism is not linked to a certain religion or place. It is a worldwide phenomenon. There are terrorist operations in Europe, the United States, Africa, Latin America...the world as a whole is full of terrorism."

During his statement to AL-HAYAH Ghali telephoned his office at the United Nations in New York to ask how Iraq's negotiations with the United Nations were proceeding as regards implementing Security Council Resolution 986 and securing an acceptable formula to implement the oil-for-food principle. He learned that there were still obstacles to an agreement, especially as regards ways of monitoring Iraqi oil revenues and ensuring that the food reaches the Iraqi people.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Arab League Council Expresses 'Solidarity' With Libya

LD1503202296 Tripoli JANA in English
1758 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, 15 Mar (JANA) — At the conclusion of its session which ended yesterday in Cairo the Arab League council renewed its stand and solidarity with the Great Jamahiriyah against the imposed unfair measures.

The council has confirmed its previous decisions about solidarity with the Great Jamahiriyah and pledged its ahderence to the practical proposals formulated by the League's council.

The Arab League council expressed its regret for the continuation of the imposed unfair measures on the Great Jamahiriyah despite the efforts and initiatives of various international and regional organisations demanding the lifting of these measures and arriving to a peaceful and just solution to the so-called Lockerbie cause.

The council also confirmed its support to the Great Jamahiriyah's right to adequate compensation for the material and human casulties and damages inflicted on it by these unfair imposed measures. The council has called on the Arab Committee of Seven to intensify its efforts and make contact with the concerned parties in order to reach a peaceful and just solution to this cause.

The Arab League council also assigned the general secretary for the Arab League to implement the following decision of the Arab League:

The Arab League council, while recalling its last decision in this matter, the last one being no 5506 dated 21.9.95, expressed its great concern regarding the material and human damages inflicted on the Libyan Arab people by the imposed unfair measures by the Security Council's decision no 748/92 and 8983/93 [as received]. The council also regrets the insistence of the concerned Western states on their position which refuses to respond to the continuous efforts to find a settlement in accordance with the principles of international law and within the framework of understanding and constructive dialogue.

The council also expresses its esteem for the solidarity of the regional organisations such as the OAU, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organisation of Islamic Conference as well as the Group of 77 which is standing with the Great Jamahiriyah in this crisis.

It re-affirms Provision 183 of the final convention issued by the 11th session of the Non Aligned Movements conference held in Colombia on 20.10.95 as well as decision No 23 issued by the Islamic foreign ministers conference session of tolerance, solidarity and peace held in Conakry from 9th - 12th December 1995. And after reviewing the results of the meeting of the Committee of Seven the council decided to:

(1) Re-affirm its previous decision regarding solidarity with the Great Socialist Libyan Arab People's Jamahiriyah as well as supporting its efforts aimed at arriving at a peaceful solution to the crisis.

(2) Adhering to the Arab League's decision no 5373/27.3.94.

(3) Expressing regret for the continuation of the unfair measures imposed on the Great Jamahiriyah despite the efforts and initiatives of different regional and international organisations aimed at arriving at a peaceful solution to the crisis and demanding the lifting of the unfair measures.

(4) Supporting the Great Jamahiriyah's right in obtaining adequate compensation for the material and human casualties which are continually inflicted by the implementation of Security Council decision 731, 748 and 883.

(5) Calling for the Arab Committee of Seven to intensify its efforts and make contacts with the concerned parties aiming at arriving at a peaceful and just solution to the crisis.

(6) Assigning the general secretary of the Arab League to follow up the implementation of these decisions.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Arab Committee on Libyan-West 'Crisis' Meets in Cairo

NC1403205996 Cairo MENA in English
1958 GMT 14 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, 14 Mar (MENA)—The Seven-Man Committee in charge of looking into the Libya-West Lockerbie crisis held a meeting at the Arab League headquarters here this evening on the sidelines of the Arab League Ministerial Council sessions which opened here today.

The conferees reviewed efforts seeking a peaceful settlement to the Libyan-West crisis as well as the mandatory measures imposed against Libya.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: Sha'th on Sharm al-Shaykh Conference

JN1603101396 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic
0615 GMT 16 Mar 96

[Telephone interview with Dr. Nabil Sha'th, minister of planning and international cooperation in the Palestinian Authority, by Fathi al-Barqawi in the studio in Jericho; from the "The New Day" feature—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Al-Barqawi] Dr. Sha'th, good morning.

[Sha'th] Good morning.

[Al-Barqawi] The Sharm al-Shaykh conference was not an ordinary conference. It was a unique conference held in unusual circumstances. What did we get from it?

[Sha'th] One should view the conference as being held in unusual and difficult circumstances, where Israel, backed by the United States, wanted to place us in a corner and to accuse us as if we are the ones to blame. It also wanted to elicit all forms of support and assistance for Israel, and to have the conference respond to part of the Israeli hysteria seeking to justify the operation of closure and starvation as a legitimate security measure for confronting our failure to combat terrorism. This was the stand prior to the conference and at its beginning. This also was the spirit of the joint statement the conference was to issue. A Palestinian-Arab-European alliance emerged at the conference because President Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] exerted huge efforts in and outside the conference; because the conference was held in Egypt; because President Husni Mubarak and his very active and able minister 'Amr Musa supported us, supported brother Abu-'Ammar, and the Palestinian team; not to mention the role the Europeans played, particularly President Jacques Chirac who fully supported the Palestinians at this conference. We should not forget that there were 16 Arab countries. There is no doubt that all participants listened with admiration to Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal's speech, for example, and to the other positive speeches. We extricated ourselves from the siege and from the corner where it was planned to place us. The joint statement was completely altered and became more balanced and rational. I believe that in the end, there was pressure on Israel to lift the siege and end the starvation and collective punishment policy. Even President Clinton's speech to the conference was balanced. Then, there were the private talks with the Israeli side where all insisted on balance, on the need to support the PA which was carrying out its duties well, and on stopping all that Israel is doing under the pretext of security.

Well, of course, in addition to this, there was support for Israel, for the Labor Party, and for Mr. Peres following the bloody operations which brought about these circumstances which were used to justify all the measures that were taken against the Palestinian citizens.

In reality, the conference was not bad. I say this sincerely as a person who was close to President Abu-'Ammar at the conference.

[Al-Barqawi] The lifting of the siege on the West Bank cities yesterday seems to be a beginning of a more lenient stand in the region, and here on Palestinian soil.

[Sha'th] It goes without saying that it is a beginning. Fishermen began going out to sea, and food supplies and staples began to enter from Rafah, al-Mintar, and Qarni. This is not taking place as quickly as we want, as efficiently as we wish. But, this is what pressure by the international community can achieve in the current circumstances we experience. We have to be patient, to work, exert efforts, demonstrate solidarity, and act as a militant people who have carried out a protracted struggle against an Israeli siege during the intifadah. The world supports us and we were treated in a very balanced manner. All the committees that were proposed comprise Israel as well as the PA. President Abu-'Ammar was one of the most four or five important figures in this conference. I believe our intensive and swift action brought results, if not all the results we wanted to achieve at one time.

[Al-Barqawi] Dr. Sha'th, you spoke a short while ago of meetings with the Israelis, the Arab delegations, and the European delegations on the sideline of the conference. You most certainly attended the meeting between President 'Arafat and President Clinton.

[Al-Barqawi] It was a positive meeting. Naturally, we know what are the responsibilities of the United States, the special importance it gives to Israel. There is no need to explain this. In spite of this, President Clinton showed understanding of the Palestinian situation in his speech and during the private meeting which lasted 45 minutes. He showed full understanding of the difficulties the PA and the Palestinian people encounter, the need to eliminate them, and the need to resume assistance so that this people can stand on their feet as a free and independent people. However, he always used to reiterate U.S. sympathy for the Israeli stand. He did this many times during his visit to Israel, not to mention the $100 million given to Israel to help it combat terrorism while we are asked to stop this terrorism but without any assistance. The world is unfair, and the United States is unfair. In spite of this, matters were not as bad as they could have been had it not been for our intensive moves and the support of President Mubarak and Chirac.

[Al-Barqawi] Dr. Sha'th, following the recent Israeli measures, the peace process did not only come to a halt, but has in fact moved backward. What can be done now?

[Sha'th] Bilateral meetings have started. I believe they started, clearly, in Sharm al-Shaykh and also in the meeting that we held yesterday with Israeli security officials. Meetings will, I believe, resume gradually and in various ways. The Syrian-Israeli negotiations will resume in the United States. We will also return to the old formulas, including the Palestinian-Israeli summits. All these will resume.

Of course, we hope there will be no more bloody operations and we will do everything we can to stop their recurrence and to foil them before they occur. We are duty bound to do that and the peace process requires such a thing, regardless of the result. But at the same time, we always insist that the peace process should return to its course and that Israel should abide by what it has signed and not delay the implementation of its future commitments, such as withdrawal from Hebron, the release of prisoners, and advancing toward the final phase negotiations. In fact, this is the basic political objective, even for those who want to fight terrorism. Terrorism cannot be fought by security measures only, but by creating political hopes and economic prosperity.

[Al-Barqawi] Dr. Sha'th, I know that you are not a security man, but a political and economic planning man. Do you believe that elements from Hamas or the Islamic Jihad can resume the suicide operations after all the damage inflicted on us the Palestinians, particularly the laborers and the people who are facing difficult conditions?

[Sha'th] There is a difference between ability and desire. Regarding ability, I believe it is difficult to stop these operations completely. As long as there is one individual who is prepared to commit suicide, it is difficult to say there is no ability. Of course, we and all people are doing our best. The question is that of desire. Does the Hamas leadership really have a desire to continue to sabotage this process and inflict damage on this people. What is the reason for this? This is the question. We had a dialogue with the Hamas leadership for a long time, and we asked this same question. I do not want to do injustice to anyone, but it seems that the people we are holding the dialogue with are not the decision makers. This, however, does not make them any less responsible. They have to return to the sound course and consider the interests of their people and the future of their people and nation. They have a responsibility to the future of our people and we all must shoulder this responsibility.

[Al-Barqawi] Those you are holding the dialogue with are not the decision makers. Do you mean that the orders come from abroad?

[Sha'th] They, at least, say so when confronted with their violations of what they committed themselves to. We say for example: Only yesterday, you issued a statement in Gaza announcing an end to these operations, and then a new operation is carried out. It seems that what they say is not all fabricated. Orders come from abroad, and there is a split between the political and security bodies. There is also a lack of responsibility toward the [Palestinian] cause as a whole. We had long years of armed struggle. At that time, we wished we had armies fighting on our side for the sake of freedom and in order to arrive at the day on which we set foot on this liberated territory. We faced difficulties, siege, and starvation. But we are now standing in our homeland and we have a future. The world in fact wants us to succeed. I reject the hopeless argument made by some of our brothers who say that the world is standing against us. The world is not standing against us. It wants us to succeed. Therefore, the matter remains in our hands. Security here is connected to political future. We must control security for the benefit of our people's political and economic interest.

[Al-Barqawi] Let me recall what brother Abu-'Ammar said in Sharm al-Shaykh: that the advocates of extremism and the enemies of peace are an isolated and denounced minority.

Palestinian Affairs: Sha'th Calls Deportation 'Crime,' Praises Summit

JN1503160796 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1248 GMT 15 Mar 96

[Interview with Nabil Sha'th, Palestinian minister of planning and international cooperation, by 'Asif Humaydi, from the "Today's Events" program; place and date not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Humaydi] Gentlemen: Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres recently threatened to deport a number of Palestinians. Dr. Nabil Sha'th talked to us about this issue, as well as the Palestinian stand on it. He also spelled out his assessment of the recent Sharm al-Shaykh summit in Egypt.

[Sha'th] The summit shows more hysteria from Shim'on Peres than we expected. Deportation is a crime, according to international law, positive laws, and the Geneva conventions on occupied territories. People cannot be expelled from their country. We have accepted with extreme anger the punishments and imprisonment. People who have been tried and jailed should be released as a result of the peace process. We have fought to release all our brother prisoners. Deportation is a crime and a flagrant violation that we reject and resist in every way.

[Humaydi] You were a member of the delegation that went to Sharm al-Shaykh. Some people say that the Sharm al-Shaykh summit was only an Israeli public relations event.

[Sha'th] This is not true. We know that three leaders called for the Sharm al-Shaykh summit. Each one had his own objectives. Brother President Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] called for the summit during the opening session of the Legislative Council; President Husni Mubarak called for it a year ago; and President Clinton also called for it. Each of these had a certain objective. We know that the United States wanted to support Israel and stand by Shim'on Peres and his party following the recent painful events and the suicide operations that took place in Jerusalem, Ashqelon, and Tel Aviv.

But despite the unilateral U.S.-Israeli trend, this was an international conference that included 16 Arab states and several European countries. Therefore, it was impossible for the summit to bow to this unilateral trend. In light of the delegations' speeches, the conference's final statement is balanced, supports the continuation of the peace process, and opposes terrorism in general, not just in our country. It does not accuse the Palestinian Authority in any way, contrary to Israel's plans. The conference treated brother Abu-'Ammar on an equal footing with President Husni Mubarak, President Bill Clinton, and Shim'on Peres.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Blames Violence on Iran, 'Some Arab Countries'

JN1603164096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 16 Mar 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] No one can coerce the Palestinian people, President Yasir 'Arafat emphasized in an address to the people who gathered in front of the presidential office in Gaza today to express their support for the Palestinian Authority [PA] and their rejection of the collective punishment policy adopted by Israeli occupation authorities against the Palestinian people.

President 'Arafat added that the Palestinian people are being subjected to a serious wave of schemes that they [not further identified] are trying to impose on the Palestinian march.

He said the PA will expand to include the entire West Bank, noting that the PA now has control over 31 percent of our territories in the West Bank, which is the first phase. He added that this will be followed by a second phase in approximately six months and third phase six months after that.

President 'Arafat said that the blessed intifadah entrenched the pillars of Palestinian existence on the geopolitical map after an international decision to negate the Palestinian people.

President 'Arafat spoke about the recent acts of violence. He said that these acts had been carried out under orders from Iran and some Arab countries. The president said that the objective is to subdue the Palestinians and try to besiege them. He added that there was an attempt in Sharm al-Shaykh to besiege the Palestinian people. However, he said, we prevailed with the stand supported by our friends and brothers.

President 'Arafat said we are required to build the pillars of the Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital. The president noted statements by Avishay Raviv, leader of the Israeli extremist movement, Eyal, to the Jewish newspaper Ourashalaim on Raviv's five meetings with Palestinian groups at the Filastin Hotel in Gaza and their agreement to stop peace process.

It is worth noting that the masses interrupted President 'Arafat with chants in support of peace, denouncing the Israeli military siege, and renouncing violence and terrorism.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat—Iran Training, Financing 'Extremist Groups'

JN1703212396 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 17 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report over video; italicizes passages in English]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat has stated that Iran's support for and training of extremist groups is hard evidence of attempts to obstruct the peace process in the region. In a statement to the press this morning, President 'Arafat said that from the beginning, Iran worked against the peace process.

[Begin recording] [Unidentified correspondent] *Mr. President, good morning. Why you think Iran tried to kill the peace process?*

['Arafat] *I do not know. You have to ask their leaders. But you know that they are financing, and they are training, and they are supporting all these fanaticals.*

[Correspondent] *In the last, the Palestinian Authority succeeded very well, and these explosions happen. Do you think also Iran try to kill what the Palestinian Authority doing?*

['Arafat] *From the beginning, they are against the peace process.* [end recording]

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas, Jihad Warn of Attacks if 'Arafat Fails To Conciliate

TA1803100496 Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew 18 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by Yosi Torpstein]

[FBIS Translated Text] Senior Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad activists wish to meet with Palestinian Authority [PA] Chairman Yasir 'Arafat to persuade him to call off the PA activities against their organizations and to stop arresting their activists. They claim that if their wish is not granted, radical activists will again try to stage attacks before the Israeli elections. This has been stated by a source who is close to the West Bank branch of Hamas.

Salim al-Za'nun, the acting chairman of the Palestine National Council, announced yesterday in Gaza that a number of Palestinian organizations, from both the opposition and the pro-peace camp, have submitted a joint petition for a meeting with Yasir 'Arafat for the purpose of discussing the establishment of "a committee for national-Islamic unity."

The organizations seeking a meeting with 'Arafat include: Hamas; the Islamic Jihad; the Islamic National Salvation Party (identified with Hamas, which was established about six months ago but did not participate in the Palestinian elections); the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine; and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. They were joined by organizations supportive of 'Arafat's policy: Fatah and FIDA, the Palestinian Democratic Union Party. The petition was also signed by the Palestinian People's Party, which supports the peace process but has reservations about the Oslo accords.

According to al-Za'nun, the petitioners will learn within two days whether 'Arafat is prepared to hold the meeting. If he is, a meeting will be held at his office.

Al-Za'nun added that after the meeting, 'Arafat will consider the possibility of moderating his moves against Hamas and the Islamic Jihad.

Palestinian sources said that 'Arafat has been considering granting 'Imad al-Faluji a portfolio in the PA Council he is about to announce. Al-Faluji is a former senior Hamas activist who ran in the elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council despite the Hamas decision to boycott them. After being expelled from Hamas as a result of his plan to run in the elections, he joined a Fatah list and was elected to the Legislative Council. It should be noted that 'Arafat is supposed to establish the PA Council within five weeks of the Legislative Council's first meeting, which was held in Gaza 12 days ago. Al-Faluji's appointment may help 'Arafat to refute the Hamas charges by arguing that the PA maintains "national unity with the Islamic movements."

Palestinian Affairs: Police Arrest Man Planning Suicide Attack

TA1703160096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian police arrested in Gaza an Islamic Jihad activist about to carry out a suicide attack in Tel Aviv. Palestinian police sources said that the man, Rashid Ibrahim Saqr, 21 of al-Shaja'iyah, had planned to carry out the terrorist attack at a Tel Aviv bus stop last Wednesday [13 March], but was detained five days earlier carrying $8,500 in cash, which he had received as payment. The sources said that Saqr had planned his actions in detail and had been due to receive 10 kg of explosives for the attack.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Denies Reports of Assassination Plot Against Clinton

JN1703110196 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 17 Mar 96 p 13

[Unattributed report: "Palestinian Organizations: Israel Is Responsible for Continued Violence and Tension"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Four Palestinian organizations have urged crystallizing a national position proceeding from the notion that the Israeli occupation and its repressive measures are principally responsible for maintaining violence and tension in the region.

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Palestinian Democratic Union Party, and the Palestinian People's Party issued a joint statement in which they said: We call for shaping up Palestinian national relations on the basis of democracy and respect for pluralism and the opinions of others in line with our national democratic heritage and the safety of the domestic front.

They underlined the importance of embarking on a serious and comprehensive national dialogue, noting that all parties should be committed to the results of this dialogue and should devote all their energies to serve our people, their interests, and national cause.

They called upon the United States, Russia, the EU, and the sisterly Arab countries to use their influence and urge the Israeli side to implement resolutions of international legitimacy, which will secure permanent peace for the countries and peoples of the region.

They urged immediate negotiations on the final settlement in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy. They said that what is required is a final and permanent settlement that will ensure political separation, sovereignty, and secure borders for the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and provide a proper groundwork for peace and an end to the circle of violence.

For its part, Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, stressed that it will continue to stick to the option of all-out resistance against the Zionist entity. It asserted its keenness on national unity and the sanctity of the Palestinian blood.

In a statement, it said: The Zionist enemy's floating of false and fabricated reports on plans to assassinate U.S. President Bill Clinton is a bid to spark world hostility toward Hamas and distort its legitimate jihad against the Zionist occupier.

It urged the Palestinian Authority to immediately stop its measures against the Palestinian people and their establishments in order to preserve the unity of the Palestinian rank.

Palestinian Affairs: Police Reportedly Arrest Jihad's al-Shami, al-Hindi

JN1603220596 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 2000 GMT 16 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Palestinian police in the Gaza Strip have arrested 35 Islamic Jihad supporters, including two leaders, in the last few days. Islamic Jihad sources said police took the group's leader and spokesman 'Abdallah al-Shami from his home this afternoon. Muhammad al-Hindi, another leader, was detained in the last few days.

The Palestinian self-rule authority has arrested hundreds of suspected militants, or their backers, since the suicide bombings began in Israel on February 25th, but most arrests have been from the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] group. Palestinian police declined to comment on the arrests. News of the arrests came a day after Palestinian sources said an Islamic Jihad activist from Khan Yunus in Gaza carried out the March 4th suicide bombing that killed 13 people in Tel Aviv.

Palestinian Affairs: Israel Reportedly To Launch 'Operation' on Prison

JN1803120196 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 18 Mar 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Israel Is Preparing for a Landing Operation on a Prison in Gaza To Kill or Arrest Hamas and Jihad Prisoners"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A source at the Islamic Jihad Movement Command said that consultations are currently underway between the [Palestinian] Preventive Security in Gaza and Israeli security officials to distract attention from an Israeli military landing operation on the Tall al-Hawa' prison in Shaykh 'Ijlin area on the Gazan coast.

The source told AL-MAJD that the objective of the landing operation is to kill or arrest over 300 prisoners who are members of or affiliated with Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and the Islamic Jihad Movement. Among those 300 are 10 members whom Israel had earlier insisted the Palestinian Authority should hand over to it.

Palestinian Affairs: Police Continue 'Campaigns' To Arrest Hamas Members

JN1703162396 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The General Police Department informs all citizens that the security agencies are continuing their campaigns to seize weapons and explosives and to arrest wanted members of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], the Islamic Jihad, and other outlawed organizations.

Citizens must surrender any weapons and explosives in their possession. They must also refrain from sheltering or helping wanted persons. Citizens must also cooperate with the security agencies and provide information about these wanted people. Any person who violates these instructions, who is found giving shelter to a wanted person or in the possession of weapons or explosives, or who fails to give any information he may have on these weapons and explosives will be prosecuted.

We appreciate the citizens' understanding and cooperation with the security agencies to give information on any individual who undermines our people's resources and ambitions in the name of patriotism.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Leader Rejects Killing of Innocents

JN1703071596 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Shaykh Ahmad Yasin [Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, leader] renewed his rejection of any operations to kill innocent people. Shaykh Yasin emphasized that Islam forbids killing innocent people in all case, especially during war.

Palestinian Affairs: Positive Identification of Dizengoff Bomber Reported

TA1503192296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Palestinian sources in Gaza say that the suicide terrorist who committed the attack on Dizengoff Street in Tel Aviv last week is Ramiz 'Abd-al-Qadir Muhammad 'Abid, aged 22, from the Khan Yunus refugee camp and a member of the Islamic Jihad.

Palestinian Police sources said that the terrorist's parents gave them his picture after he disappeared. The Palestinian Police gave the picture to the Israel Police, and the man was positively identified after an examination by the Forensic Institute in Abu-Kabir. The suicide terrorist was a student at the Islamic College in Gaza and had been arrested previously by the Palestinian Police.

Palestinian Affairs: Israeli Cabinet Decides To Extend Closure

JN1703153096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a session today, the Israeli Cabinet decided to extend the closure of, and the siege on Palestine. The occupation authorities announced some measures related to the passage of goods via the Qarni crossing to and from Gaza Province and the entry of Palestinian laborers to the industrial areas near the Bayt Hanun crossing.

Palestinian Affairs: Committee To Remain in Session To Tackle 'Siege'

JN1703205496 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 17 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] During its meeting under the chairmanship of President Yasir 'Arafat, the PLO Executive Committee decided to remain in session to tackle developments on issues under discussion, particularly the continued Israeli siege on the Palestinian people, and to monitor future Israeli steps.

During its meeting that lasted until late last night, the PLO Executive Committee also discussed the results of the recent Peacemakers' Summit in Sharm al-Shaykh, as well as the negative impact of the Israeli military siege imposed on Palestine since 24 last month.

The Executive Committee then reviewed the speeches of the delegations that participated in the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, stressing the need to continue the Middle East peace process as the only way to eliminate violence.

Palestinian Affairs: Al-Tibi—Closure Worse Than in Likud's 'Darkest Days'

TA1803073196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0405 GMT 18 Mar 96

[Telephone interview with Dr. Ahmad al-Tibi, adviser to PA Chairman Yasir 'Arafat, by Arye Golan; place not given — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Golan] Do you know how 'Arafat reacted to Peres' announcement that Hebron will not be evacuated if he does not arrest Muhammad Dayf, the head of Hamas' [Islamic Resistance Movement] military wing?

[Al-Tibi] Lately, there have been a growing number of statements making the withdrawal from Hebron conditional on a variety of bizarre conditions: A few weeks ago, it was the amendment of the Palestinian Charter, and now it is the arrest of one man or another in the Gaza Strip. To say that this did not cause the Palestinian Authority [PA] to rejoice would be an understatement; it caused serious resentment.

[Golan] You know, the Palestinians must deliver the goods they promised in the agreement.

[Al-Tibi] Anyone who thinks Yasir 'Arafat can push a button and Dayf will report to him at once is mistaken. Neither Shim'on Peres nor any Israeli Government ever had such a button with regard to Yahya 'Ayyash, alias The Engineer, or any other person.

[Golan] The word is that PA officials held contacts with Dayf until recently, but suddenly they are claiming that the man has disappeared and that they do not know where to find him.

[Al-Tibi] This is because he, his followers, and the whole world know that the PA is looking for him, and he does not report to the PA every morning to say where he is. All his followers are in jail; suspected violators of the law, as well as organizers and planners of terrorist attacks, are in custody. People on the famous list have been arrested. Yet another person on the list was arrested two days ago, and only two senior people on the list are still at large. The PA has recently been making a vast and supreme effort to crack down on the bombers.

[Golan] Perhaps it woke up too late.

[Al-Tibi] I believe the recent efforts are good, both for the internal Palestinian conviction about the peace process and for the interest of the Palestinian people. Yet anyone who wants to link the withdrawal from Hebron with the arrest of some man and anyone who does not let an entire people breathe, as has been the case recently and particularly in the past week, is making a very gross mistake. The punishment imposed on the Palestinian people is unbearable. In the darkest times of the Likud's rule....

[Golan, interrupting] The bombings perpetrated by Palestinians are also unbearable, and you, as an Israeli Arab, know it. You live here with us.

[Al-Tibi] Arye, never before has there been such an emotional demonstration by the overwhelming majority of the Palestinian people against terrorist attacks and such an emotional identification with Jewish victims as has been the case in recent weeks and after the recent bombings. An entire people or the overwhelming majority took to the streets and continue to demonstrate in support of the peace process and against the terror, amid the closure and the ban on the delivery of medicines.

Now there is a problem with this positive popular reversal, and people say they want to breathe. I would like to repeat that never in the darkest days of the Likud's rule was the Palestinian people punished so severely, and there were serious terrorist attacks then, too. These attacks are terrible and appalling, but I do not understand why pregnant women have to be punished, medicines must not be allowed in, or a man with a ruptured esophagus is banned from crossing the checkpoint and turned back.

Somebody ought to be ashamed. A society that does not raise its voice — as someone did only two days ago — against the ban on the delivery of medicines for babies, milk, and oxygen has a problem. You preached to us for many years, but you have a problem. Somebody ought to be ashamed about what has been done in the past two weeks.

[Golan] Ahmad al-Tibi, thank you very much.

Palestinian Affairs: Fatah, Popular Committee Urge Protests Against Siege

JN1503205896 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 15 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Fatah Movement called on the masses to stage marches and sit-ins in front of the Israeli roadblock on the Palestinian West Bank on Saturday to protest the Israeli military and economic siege imposed on the Palestinian territories.

The popular committee for confronting the siege imposed on Palestine called for making next Tuesday a comprehensive national day for breaking the siege. The committee urged all of the sons of our people and their national forces to drive their cars to the military roadblocks that separate Palestinian cities and villages.

The committee urged governments around the world and international public opinion to work immediately to end the siege imposed on the Palestinian people. The committee also urged Israeli public opinion and the forces of peace to show solidarity with it in its struggle toward lifting the siege imposed on our people.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Orders Change in West Bank, Gaza Names

JN1803072996 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat issued a circular to all government departments and agencies asking them to use the word Palestine to refer to all the territory under the National Authority's jurisdiction.

The circular also says that the term the Northern Districts [al-alwiyah al-shamaliyah] should be used instead of the West Bank, and the term Gaza District [liwa' ghazzah] instead of the Gaza Strip.

Algeria

Algeria: U.S. Envoy Summoned Over 'Unfounded Allegations' in Report

LD1503145196 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1400 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A statement by the Foreign Affairs Ministry says that the head of the Libyan Brotherhood Bureau was received yesterday at the ministry's headquarters, where he was asked to provide clarifications on unacceptable remarks published by the Libyan mass media over Algeria's participation in the Sharm al-Shaykh summit.

A second statement by the Foreign Affairs Ministry says that the ambassador of the United States in Algeria was also received at the ministry's headquarters, where he was asked to provide clarifications on the unfounded allegations included in a special report on human rights in Algeria, published on 6 March by the U.S. State Department.

Algeria: Bomb in Garbage Dump Kills 2 Near Algiers

LD1603223196 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2200 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a statement, the security services today announced that two people were killed and five others were injured when a bomb went off near Baraki [near Algiers]. The statement indicated that the explosion went off in a garbage dump.

Algeria: Socialist Forces Front Reelects Party Leader

LD1603150096 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The second congress of the Socialist Forces Front [FFS] today renewed its confidence in its president, Hocine Ait Ahmed, for a three-year period [as heard]. The president of the party is expected to choose members of the FFS National Secretariat. According to the basic new laws of this political party, it is for the FFS president to propose the acting secretary general for a renewable one-year period. Details of this subject with Messaoud Boulatiour.

[Boulatiour] As expected, the historical leader of the Socialist Forces Front was elected president of the party for the next five years by 605 votes out of a total of 750 votes cast. Ten candidates presented themselves to the party presidency, among whom was a woman representing the Algerian expatriates who came second with 35 votes only, ahead of the rest of the candidates, the majority of whom were young — some of them did not score any votes.

In the upcoming weeks, Hocine Ait Ahmed is expected to start consultations with the elected National Council to appoint — and this is new — a party first secretary. This post has been created to alleviate the burden on the president, particularly when he is abroad, in order to overcome the problems which previously occurred in the conduct of party affairs. Observers expect that the post of first secretary will be given to a personality who will confer a national dimension to the party, which will benefit from such during future elections.

This congress did not witness any intense debate, except from the few voices from Tizi-Ouzou and expatriates. This aspect did not prevent the participants in the congress from renewing confidence in the known political line of the party and blessing Ait Ahmed's proposal to hold a peace conference in Algiers or in another province to solve the political crisis.

Egypt

Egypt: Musa Says Hamas Opposing 'Occupation' in 'the Wrong Way'

NC1803103196 Paris AFP in English 1007 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, March 18 (AFP)—The Palestinian radical group Hamas is opposing Israeli occupation "the wrong way" with its deadly bombings, Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said in an interview published Monday [18 March].

"Hamas are expressing their frustration with the occupation and the peace process. But they are expressing it the wrong way," Musa told the weekly English-language MIDDLE EAST TIMES.

"Hamas has the right to express its reservations by peaceful means. But to use violence is something we definitely reject and condemn," he said.

Musa made the comments before last Wednesday's anti-terrorism summit held in Egypt to salvage the peace process after a string of Hamas and Islamic Jihad bombings killed 61 people.

"I don't think it's wise to pinpoint a certain state as sponsoring terrorism because there are also the circumstances inherent in the territories, Palestine and Israel to consider," Musa said.

The Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS) "is the product of circumstances in the occupied territories and the confrontation between the Palestinians and the Israelis," he said.

Egypt: Musa Comments on Arab League Meeting, Peacemakers Summit

NC1503135196 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1300 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has emphasized that there are no substantial differences over the agenda of the Arab League Council, which concluded its meetings yesterday evening. He said that there were diverse views on the issue of the Arab court of justice and the code of honor for Arab security and cooperation. He said that some of these diverse views concern the setting up of the Arab court of justice and others are due to financial or constitutional reasons and not political ones.

Regarding the Arab code of honor, Musa said that certain ideas were proposed and are under discussion; that is why this issue has been postponed until the next session of the Arab League Council.

Responding to a question on the International Summit of Peacemakers in Sharm al-Shaykh and the $100 million grant the United States gave to Israel without considering the Palestinians' situation, Musa said that what the donor nations have decided on for the Palestinians must be given to them to support them. In this respect, he stressed the need for a balance in the needs of both the Palestinians and Israelis.

Regarding the need to lift the siege on the Palestinians, Musa said that Israel is expected to implement what was discussed at the International Summit of Peacemakers, particularly the clauses of the final statement.

Egypt: Commentary Calls Sharm al-Shaykh Summit 'Total Success'

NC1503152696 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 15 Mar 96

[Commentary by Zayn al-Ja'fari: "The World Commits Itself to Bolstering the Peace Process and Fighting Terrorism"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Sharm al-Shaykh on Wednesday [13 March] was the venue of the biggest world gathering to save the peace process. At the International Peacemakers Summit, world leaders unanimously committed themselves to boosting the peace process, condemning terrorism, and calling for continuous and effective cooperation to confront and uproot all forms of terrorism, not only in the Middle East, but in all parts of the world.

The International Peacemakers Summit in Egypt was certainly a total success. All sides emphasized their determination to proceed with the peace process, support security in the region, and mobilize all means and resources to eliminate terrorism, which sought to undermine the peace process in the region. This unprecedented summit was held in response to joint efforts and contacts made by Presidents Husni Mubarak and Bill Clinton. Undoubtedly, Egypt's central role, and President Mubarak's initiative helped obtain this swift response for holding the summit at such a high level. President Clinton did not exaggerate when he told the world that President Mubarak deserved a medal of appreciation because a summit of this kind could only be held in Egypt.

The success of the summit was crowned by the fact that its chief concern was to work to support the peace process and combat the terrorism that seeks to wreck this process. Perhaps the summit's final statement proves that the leaders and representatives of the 29 countries that attended the summit were not content with merely announcing their support for the peace process and their determination to boost security and stability and coordinate international efforts to end the acts of terrorism. They agreed on practical future steps to ensure that the peace process will continue until it achieves its objective of establishing a lasting and comprehensive peace in the region.

These next steps include supporting the Palestinian-Israeli agreements, turning special attention to the needs of the Palestinian people. The Japanese foreign minister announced that his country is offering $10 million as emergency aid to improve the living conditions of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and to implement projects that create job opportunities for the Palestinians, who, in many cases, are facing hunger, as President Yasir 'Arafat said in his statement to the summit. The future steps also include support for continued negotiations to achieve a comprehensive settlement, and strengthen security and stability in the region through effective measures and further cooperation and coordination — at the bilateral, regional, and international levels — to end the acts of terrorism and prevent terrorist organizations from receiving funds and weapons.

We should not try to make a full assessment of the results of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit away from other facts, especially that an open working group from all the participants in the summit was formed to prepare recommendations on the best ways to implement the decisions of the summit. The group will meet within two weeks to complete its mission. Nevertheless, it can be said that this unprecedented summit has proved that the situation in the Middle East and its future prospects occupy a preeminent place on the world agenda. This means that security and stability in our region constitute an important part of the strategy for world stability.

Egypt: Editorials React to Sharm al-Shaykh Summit

NC1603163896 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0632 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 16 Mar (MENA)—Reactions to the Sharm al-Shaykh Summit of Peacemakers still dominate Cairo papers' headlines and editorials today.

The newspapers are unanimous that the Sharm al-Shaykh summit was a golden opportunity to remove the prospects from terrorists. It also sounded the alarm bell against the danger of terrorism, which is no longer confined to particular societies but has spread to big and small countries alike.

The papers emphasize that the summit produced balanced results and was not biased toward the Israeli side at the expense of the Palestinian one. It was not a summit only to combat terrorism, but it gave an enormous momentum to the Middle East peace process, the papers say.

AL-AHRAM says the region today is shifting from despair to hope after the Sharm al-Shaykh summit succeeded in rescuing the peace process and adopted recommendations and resolutions that give it a new impetus. This impetus, the paper adds, diminishes the remaining doubt and skepticism among the parties concerned. These recommendations and resolutions also provide a mechanism to protect the peace process from violence and terrorism. For the first time, the international community has become a guarantor for the summit's resolutions and at the same time joins the parties directly involved in implementing these resolutions, it notes.

The paper says the march of progress will not turn back. It adds that perhaps everyone has learned a lesson from the past bloody events in the region and that what remains is for the atmosphere to stay favorable for implementing the Sharm al-Shaykh summit resolutions.

Under the headline "Had it Not Been for Mubarak's Initiative", AKHBAR AL-YAWM weekly's Chief Editor Ibrahim Sa'dah writes in today's issue on the subject. He says that President Husni Mubarak was clear and frank when he emphasized that this summit's goal was a sincere commitment to the cause of peace and stability in the world as a whole, especially in the Middle East.

In recent years, he adds, the Middle East has seen active movement and tangible progress toward a just and comprehensive peace ending half a century of bloody conflict, violence, and destruction and placing the region on the threshold of a new era of reconciliation and construction.

The writer notes that what President Mubarak said confirms with full sincerity and frankness that the Egyptian president has no other concern or goal but to make peace for Arab peoples from the [Atlantic] Ocean to the [Arab] Gulf on the one hand and to achieve and ensure security, peace, and stability for the Middle Eastern nations on the other. This is after it has been proven that wars, all wars, have achieved nothing for the nations but poverty, suffering, and the scarcity of everything. [passage omitted]

The writer explains that for all these and other reasons, President Mubarak was very concerned to undermine the plots of the enemies of peace from both the Arab and Israeli sides. These enemies have no concern but to shake security by killing innocent civilians and stirring up both the Arab and Israeli political scenes. By this, they hoped to halt the peace process and, in turn, the paramount goal for which the enemies of peace are living will materialize.

[passage omitted] The writer says the resolutions passed by the peacemakers summit were strong, decisive, and committed to the peace process. This, he adds, was President Husni Mubarak's first goal when he launched his historic initiative and invited great world peacemakers to meet in Sharm al-Shaykh and agree on a group of principles and resolutions. These resolutions assured the world's nations in general and the nations of the Middle East in particular that the peace process will not cease and that the crimes of violence and terrorism have not and will not succeed in shaking or hampering that process.

In his weekly column in AKHBAR AL-YAWM under the headline "A Masterful Stroke" journalist Samir 'Abd-al-Qadir says: President Mubarak's initiative to rescue the Middle East peace from a complete breakdown is in my view a masterful stroke. [passage omitted]

He adds that the quick response by a great number of heads of state to President Mubarak's invitation and U.S. President Clinton's joining this group of leaders who advocate peace and sharing the Egyptian leader's efforts to make this serious conference a success is unequivocal evidence that the entire world aspires to peace. It is also evidence that the entire world is suffering from deep and painful wounds caused by terrorism and that the world looks forward to a peaceful and stable future in which nations enjoy tranquility and peace. A future overwhelmed by technological advancement for mankind's happiness, not for killing, destruction, and terrifying peaceful people, he adds.

AL-JUMHURIYAH says in its editorial that the Sharm al-Shaykh summit will remain in the nation's and world's memory as a summit of peacemakers. [passage omitted]

The paper emphasizes that the summit was an occasion to clarify to the world that a genuine peace requires comprehensive economic support for the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza. It also was an occasion to clarify that a genuine peace requires urgent talks on the final status of the Palestinian land, in addition to the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

In his article in AL-JUMHURIYAH, Chief Editor Mahfuz al-Ansari says that for the first time, the Sharm al-Shaykh summit placed the Middle East conflict on the right track through the agenda put forward to the participants. He adds that the summit explained to the Palestinians that they were not the only aggressors, killers, and radicals, that the Arabs were not enemies of peace, and that violence was a reaction to the Israeli radical man's violence. He notes that the summit also revealed that the continued Israeli occupation is what triggered the incidents of fury and violence. [passage omitted]

In his daily column "Through the Keyhole" in AL-JUMHURIYAH, Kamil al-Zuhayri says the conflict between a peace based on security and one based on justice remains the mystery of the crisis of the peace process. He adds that peace will remain threatened, fragile, dim, and cold as long as Israel clings to the theory that security has priority over international legitimacy and withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories. He emphasizes that no genuine peace will come about unless it is based on justice and that only through justice can security and peace materialize. [passage omitted]

In his daily column "Just an Opinion" in AL-AHRAM, Salah Muntasir says the conference succeeded to a great extent in producing balanced results entitling all its participants to say they all received the things they had hoped for. He adds that Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres got what he wanted regarding the condemnation of recent terrorist attacks in Israel. This is in addition to Yasir 'Arafat's denunciation of the radical wings of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and al-Jihad in his speech, the writer notes. [passage omitted]

Egypt: Joint Statement Issued with Tunisian Foreign Minister

NC1503132896 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1200 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Mar (MENA)—Egypt and Tunisia have expressed their belief that there is a need to unite efforts in order to bolster the march of joint Arab action and meet the demands of changes and developments in the international arena. This should be done within the framework of the Arab League. They also expressed their support for the institutions of joint Arab action. This came in a joint statement issued in Cairo after Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa's meeting with Tunisian Foreign Minister Habib Ben Yahya on the occasion of the latter's visit to Cairo.

The two sides agreed on the importance of continuing the peace march. They confirmed their support for the efforts being exerted to find a comprehensive, just, and permanent solution to the Middle East problem.

The two sides welcomed the results of the Summit of Peacemakers in Sharm al-Shaykh and the positive effects it will have in moving the peace process toward its objective.

In their statement, the Egyptian and Tunisian sides renewed their support for the Palestinian National Authority's efforts to reinforce its pillars and bolster its infrastructure so that the Palestinian people can retrieve their full national rights and a permanent, comprehensive, and just peace can be realized in the region.

The statement said that proceeding from the fact that Egypt and Tunisia belong to the Mediterranean region, the two sides reviewed the appropriate means for bolstering stability and security in this region and providing the reasons for the growth and prosperity of its people.

The two sides agreed on the importance of bolstering European-Mediterranean cooperation and expanding coordination and consultation to continue the line of the Barcelona seminar resolutions.

The Egyptian-Tunisian statement clarified that Mr. Habib Ben Yahya's visit to Egypt, which ends today, proceeded from the strong relations between the people and leaders of the two countries and in implementation of the cooperation agreement between their Foreign Ministries, which was signed in Tunis on 15 March 1992. It also took place in response to an invitation from Mr. 'Amr Musa.

In this regard, the two sides expressed their satisfaction with the qualitative change in their relations in various sectors. This change has been realized thanks to the coordinated political administration of the two countries' leaderships.

The statement pointed out that the Egyptian and Tunisian ministers exchanged views on various issues of mutual interest on the Arab, regional, and international levels.

During the visit, Habib Ben Yahya and 'Amr Musa chaired the meetings of the follow-up committee within the framework of preparations for the fourth round of meetings of the Egyptian-Tunisian Joint Higher Committee.

President Husni Mubarak also received Habib Ben Yahya. The latter conveyed a message of friendship and appreciation to President Mubarak from his brother Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.

Egypt: Lebanese Premier Arrives, Comments on Ties, Peace Talks

NC1603105996 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0947 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 16 Mar (MENA) — Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri arrived in Egypt today for a three day visit during which he will be received by President Husni Mubarak.

Prime Minister al-Hariri will hold talks with officials on ways to promote bilateral relations.

Upon his arrival, the Lebanese prime minister thanked President Mubarak for his kind invitation. He added: I will have the honor of meeting the president tomorrow, Sunday [17 March]. We will discuss bilateral relations, particularly economic relations.

Al-Hariri said that he will discuss many issues of interest to both countries, including the development of investments, with Egyptian officials. He added: Lebanon is an importing country although it exports some products. It could play a role in marketing goods all over the world. We will discuss with the Egyptian Government the resources that Lebanon can provide for Egyptian industry and the possibility of using Lebanon as an outlet for marketing Egyptian goods.

Regarding Israeli-Lebanese negotiations, al-Hariri said: The Israelis are presently preoccupied with their own elections. At any rate, Lebanon has been involved in lengthy negotiations with Israel in Washington, but these negotiations have not resulted in anything. Washington believes that there is an important need for the Israeli negotiations to concentrate on the Palestinian and Syrian tracks. Noting that the negotiations are now at a standstill as a result of recent events, he added: At any rate, Lebanon believes that peace is the best way for all peoples. Lebanon has paid a high price as a result of the long wars, and we are looking forward to the day when Israel withdraws from all Lebanese territories and these territories are returned to the Lebanese Government.

Egyptian Prime Minister Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri, who was on hand to receive the Lebanese prime minister, said that Egyptian-Lebanese talks will deal with all aspects of relations, specifically economic relations. He noted that the trade exchange between the two countries does not exceed $80 million, even though Egypt's foreign trade reaches $25 billion, and Lebanon's share is still very small. He said: We will boost the volume of trade between the two countries and discuss joint projects.

The official delegation accompanying al-Hariri includes the ministers of agriculture, industry, oil, finance, economy, and trade. During the visit, al-Hariri will meet with Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid. He will visit a number of tourist and archaeological sites and the industrial plants in Madinat al-'Ashir Min Ramadan where he will inspect investment projects and companies.

Egypt: Musa Meets Libyan Secretary al-Fazzani

NC1503133996 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1230 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Mar (MENA)—This afternoon, Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa met with Jum'ah al-Fazzani, secretary of the General People's Committee for Unity in Libya. After the meeting, al-Fazzani said that the meeting is part of the constant consultations between Egypt and Libya to maintain the growing Egyptian-Libyan relations in all spheres under the auspices of President Husni Mubarak and Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi. He said that they also discussed regional and international issues of common concern.

Egypt: Police Arrest 32 Muslim Militants in Alexandria

NC1603161696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1458 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 16 Mar (MENA)—The State Security Intelligence Department [SSID] today foiled an attempt to revive the so-called Islamic Group [al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah] in Alexandria and arrested 32 leaders and members of the group. The SSID also seized a large quantity of the organization's papers and documents.

The public prosecutor started interrogating the suspects who made detailed confessions on their roles in this group. The SSID is continuing its efforts to apprehend the remaining members of the group.

An authoritative Interior Ministry source said the SSID received information that terrorist Taha Abu [illegible] 'Abbas Muhammad Salim, who is already serving time in an Alexandria prison for terrorist activity, had been contacting the group's leaders and members who are not in prison with the aim of reviving the group and carrying out acts of violence to destabilize the country. Abu-al-'Abbas ordered terrorists Ibrahim Mas'ad al-Sa'id Abu-'Arab and Midhat Ahmad Abu-Taha to lead and guide the group in Alexandria.

The source said the group was divided into two cells. One cell would carry out military training and extremist indoctrination of members and the other cell would recruit new elements.

The group tried to control some mosques, especially the al-Masri and 'Ubbad al-Rahman Mosques in the Karmuz area. It also tried to finance itself by demanding protection money and through thievery and blackmail. It tried to establish cells in other governorates and to contact other groups outside the country with the aim of setting up an international organization for these groups.

The security source added that in light of the information received, legal measures were adopted and the SSID stormed the group's hideouts in simultaneous raids throughout Alexandria Governorate, arresting 32 leaders of the group, notably terrorist leader Ibrahim Mas'ad al-Sa'id Abu-'Arab, who is well known for his violent methods.

The security source continued: A quantity of organizational documents and other important documents, including 270 stickers [preceding word in English but spelled out in Arabic letters] printed on computer printers and carrying the terrorist group's motto. This motto was prepared in jail when already convicted leaders of the group organized a contest to choose a new motto that imparts an international character to the group. This was proof that the group planned to extend its activities to various other countries. Also seized were a large quantity of audio cassettes on which extremist speeches were recorded, written instructions to the members of the group, leaflets for distribution to the public, and a collection of written studies and documents spelling out the group's field plans and its future objectives.

Egypt: Al-Alfi Lifts Mallawi Curfew, Comments on Carrying Arms

NC1703125196 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0945 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Al-Minya, 17 Mar (MENA) — Minister of Interior Hasan al-Alfi has announced the lifting of a curfew in the city of Mallawi, al-Minya Governorate, in Upper Egypt.

The curfew has been lifted more than two years after it was imposed. The curfew was enforced because of terrorist acts that took place in the city causing negative effects on the people including a business recession and bad living conditions which then resulted in residents leaving the city.

The announcement was made at a public gathering held in al-Minya Governorate. It was attended by al-Minya Governor Major General Mansur 'Isawi, Director of Security Major General Sami 'Abd-al-Jawad, and several leading executive and public figures in the governorate.

Al-Alfi said the situation is now stable and reassured the citizens that the security authorities are now in control. He also said that the decision to lift the curfew came in response to the citizens' request after they demonstrated positive cooperation and engaged in heroic acts during confrontations. He added that the curfew had to be lifted so that the city could restore its trade and economic activities.

He said the shift of terrorist acts from one place to another in Upper Egypt does not mean that alot of terrorists exist and that they move from one location to another when security is tightened on them.

He noted that any citizen has the right to carry weapons and defend himself as long as he remains an honest citizen, but he remarked that carrying a weapon is limited to the good citizen who handles his weapon well, as he put it.

Libya

Libya: Al-Qadhdhafi, Regional Leaders Talk, Condemn Summit

LD1703205996 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Telephone conversations has taken place between the brother leader of the revolution [Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, Sudanese President 'Umar Hasan al-Bashir, and Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih.

During the conversations, an examination of the serious outcome of Sharm al-Shaykh meeting took place — a meeting which is detrimental to the Arab nation and its right to life. This is especially so following the Israelis' violation and contempt of the resolutions of the conference itself when they destroyed the family house of the Palestinian national Yahya Ayyash in front of the whole world as soon as they returned from the conference, in one of the ugliest crimes ever carried out by the Israelis since their usurpation of Arab Palestine. An act which proves that only Arabs are requested to be committed to the resolutions of Sharm al-Shaykh.

The viewpoints of the brother leader of the revolution and Presidents Hafiz al-Asad, 'Umar Hasan al-Bashir, and 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih were identical; they all agreed that Sharm al-Shaykh conference was a catastrophe for the Arab nation, its sovereignty and dignity.

Libya: JANA Criticizes U.S. Moves in Gulf

LD1703193096 Tripoli JANA in English 1839 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Doha, 17 Mar (JANA) — American military exercises began in Qatar yesterday. A spokesman for the American embassy to Qatar said that about 4000 American soldiers, helicopters, warships and gunboats will deployed in the Arabian Gulf will take part in the four day exercises.

He added that the American helicopters and warships will land 300 American Marines, during the exercises.

America, which has 21000 soldiers 75 per cent of them on 22 American warships roaming the Arab Gulf and Red Sea waters in addition to storing huge military hardware in the area, conducts about 100 military exercises annually in the region as a prelude to occupy and control the area and stealing its resources.

Mauritania

Mauritania: Foreign Minister Replaced in Government Reshuffle

LD1703182096 Paris Radio France International in French 1730 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] There has been a slight government reshuffle in Mauritania: Foreign minister Ahmed Salem Ould Lekhel has been replaced by Sidi Mahmoud Ould [illegible]eikh, the former national education minister.

The ministers of fisheries, planning, and education have also been changed.

Sudan

Sudan: Search Continues To Arrest Culprits in Attempt on Mubarak

NC1503160596 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 10 Mar 96 p 9

[From "The Brothers' Page"]

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-SUDAN AL-HADITH reports that the Sudanese judiciary has supplied all the border posts with the names of all Egyptians residing in Sudan. This Sudanese step is part of a campaign to find three Egyptians reportedly involved in the assassination attempt on President Husni Mubarak.

Citing Sudanese Public Prosecutor 'Abd-al-Rahman Ibrahim Khalifah, the paper says the lists of names were posted at all airports and ports. Khalifah restated that Egyptians will not be harassed by the Sudanese authorities. He added that the government committee he chairs will continue its search for the three wanted members of the Islamic Group despite a lack of evidence that they are in Sudan.

Sudan: 'Armed Bandits' Wound State Governor, Kill Bodyguards

AB1703133696 Paris AFP in English 0914 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Khartoum, March 17 (AFP) — Armed bandits ambushed a convoy of a Sudanese state governor, wounding him and another official and killing two bodyguards, the independent daily AL-RAI AL-AKHER reported Sunday [17 March].

The governor of North Darfur state, Yunis al-Sharif, was travelling in a convoy from his state capital al-Fashir, 800 kilometers (500 miles) west of Khartoum, to Kabkabiyaa town, the paper said.

An unknown number of gunmen attacked the convoy, killing two bodyguards.

In the shootout, Sherif was shot in the shoulder while his water supply director Joseph Akol took a bullet that entered his right side and exited the left.

Armed bands frequently make raids in the state, most often on convoys from neighboring Libya. The number of attacks has fallen from 411 in 1993 to 78 in 1995, the paper said.

Sudan: Justice Minister Claims UN Rights Monitor No Longer Needed

AB1703202496 Paris AFP in English 1947 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Khartoum, March 16 (AFP) — Sudan will seek to end the mission of the United Nations human rights observer in Khartoum because it is "no longer needed," Justice Minister Abdel Aziz Shiddo said on Saturday.

Khartoum "believes the continuation of the special UN rapporteur mission in Sudan is unnecessary and will work to end that mission," Shiddo said, quoted by the state news agency SUNA.

Shiddo accused the observer, Gaspar Biro, of "still speaking about an era that Sudan has passed and does not speak of the constitutional changes that have taken place."

He dimissed a proposal by Biro to place observers in neigboring Uganda, Kenya and Eritrea to monitor human rights abuses in Sudan, saying "information collected by them would be useless hearsay."

"The anti-Sudan attitudes of some of these countries would obstruct the flow of objective information to those observers," he added, referring to Kampala and Asmara, who have cut off diplomatic ties with Khartoum.

Khartoum will "present a report refuting all false allegations in Biro's report about the human rights situation in Sudan" at a session of the UN rights commission in Geneva on Monday, Shiddo said.

Sudan's government rights envoy Ahmed al-Mufti will head to Geneva on Sunday for the session, which lasts until April 26, and Shiddo is to join him there earlier next month.

Sudan: Numayri Reveals Contacts With al-Bashir

NC1603145396 Cairo MENA in English
1300 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, March 16 (MENA) — Former [Sudanese] president Ja'far Numayri voiced his utmost indignation at the cheap way the al-Turabi-al-Bashir duo acted during the period of his treatment in the United States and the mongering of rumors about his death.

In a statement he issued today, the former Sudanese president said that President al-Bashir contacted him by telephone when he knew he was under treatment on the pretext of inquiring after his health. Numayri said he was not at ease for the telephone call in the light of his full conviction that there was no human precedent for the terrorist al-Turabi front. All elements inside the front are prepared in a way that make all their actions go in a direction opposed to all that is humane and Islamic, he noted. Al-Bashir's answers to my queries during the telephone conversation were hesitant, he said, pointing out that he evaded answers by inviting him to return to Sudan the soonest possible. He also spoke about the possibility that Numayri lead the march in Sudan on the basis of what he called an Islamic platform, the former president said. The former Sudanese president said in his statement that he stressed to al-Bashir that power for him is not a goal per se, noting that the fate of the country cannot have any room for trifling. Al-Bashir enquired about his programme in the United States out of an unfounded imagination that he would bank on my stay in the United States and make wide-scale contacts for the sake of their faltering regime in return for the temptation he made, Numayri added. The al-Turabi front also fabricated stories about my return to Sudan, twisting all facts as I said I will return to my country without asking permission from anybody, the former Sudanese president said. He pledged at the end of his statement to carry on his struggle against the al-Turabi front and to champion his country of frustrated hopes and dreams.

Sudan: NDA Leader Confident NIF Demise Coming

96AA0147A London AL-HAWADITH in Arabic
9 Feb 96 p 36

[Interview with Sudanese opposition leader Faruq Abu-'Isa by Usamah 'Ajjaj in Asmara; date not given; first two paragraphs AL-HAWADITH introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo—In its meetings in Asmara, the capital of Eritrea, the Sudanese opposition, embodied by the National Democratic Alliance [NDA], made an important step in its bid to overthrow the al-Bashir-al-Turabi government, taking advantage of the deteriorating internal situation in Sudan, the tension in Sudan's relations with neighboring Eritrea, Ethiopia, Egypt, Uganda, and other countries, and the condemnation of the al-Bashir-al-Turabi regime for its human rights record.

AL-HAWADITH has interviewed Faruq Abu-'Isa, a Sudanese opposition leader who attended the meetings of the NDA's leadership committee in Asmara:

['Ajjaj] Can you tell us what you discussed at the meeting of the NDA's leadership committee, which represents the Sudanese opposition groups?

[Abu-'Isa] I would like to point out that disagreement exists between the opposition conference, which held its fifth session, and the leadership committee elected by the conference. This committee, which is chaired by NDA Leader Muhammad 'Uthman al-Mirghani, meets every six months. It includes all the leaders of the opposition groups: Mubarak Fadil Mahdi, in his capacity as NDA secretary general; John Garang, leader of the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement [SPLM] and commander in chief of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army [SPLA]; 'Umar Nur al-Dayyim, from the Ummah Party; Lieutenant General Fathi Ahmad 'Ali, an independent national figure; Faruq Abu-'Isa; Yona Milwak; and al-Tayyib al-Tijani, from the Communist Party. Fatimah Ahmad Ibrahim, representative of the women's movement, joined the committee as an observer until the NDA general conference approves her membership in the committee.

The leadership committee met to discuss some important issues. The previous NDA conference could not complete the discussion of these issues and referred them to the committee to complete the discussion. It also discussed the reports of the various secretariats about their activities during the past six months. The purpose of the meeting also was to draw up the military, diplomatic, and political plans to escalate the struggle and overthrow the al-Bashir-al-Turabi regime this year.

['Ajjaj] On what did you build your calculations to overthrow the al-Bashir-al-Turabi regime this year, especially as the opposition has been trying to achieve this objective for several years without success?

[Abu-'Isa] Considering the domestic, regional, and international situations facing the al-Bashir-al-Turabi regime, we are confident that it will fall this year. This regime has used all the illegitimate means of suppression and torture to stay in power. The Sudanese people have rejected and totally isolated this regime. The people's resistance at home has escalated. The SPLA, led by John Garang, has taken the initiative from the National Islamic Front [NIF] militia after defeating it on several fronts since 25 October 1995. The SPLA remains in control of the situation in the south. This is besides the people's uprising in several Sudanese cities against the NIF. This popular uprising was crowned by the broad and profound uprising of the university students last September, which was tantamount to a test of power against the al-Turabi-al-Bashir regime. During its recent meeting, the leadership committee studied the points of weakness and strength in this uprising to reinforce the factors of strength and avoid mistakes.

Furthermore, the regime has totally failed in managing the country and maintaining security and stability following the appearance of radical terrorist groups, which are threatening the people's security.

['Ajjaj] The al-Bashir-al-Turabi government has been trying to exploit the reported military confrontations with some neighboring countries to reduce the internal and external pressure on it?

[Abu-'Isa] Unprecedented deterioration has taken place in Sudan's relations with its neighbors. Tension developed into an armed conflict on the borders with Uganda, Eritrea, and Ethiopia. The regime has created this situation to divert attention from the tense domestic situation. It has fabricated these conflicts and confrontations to occupy the attention of international public opinion. The regime lies when it talks about "a foreign attack" on Sudan's border. It is trying to win the sympathy of the brothers.

['Ajjaj] What is the world's attitude to Sudan?

[Abu-'Isa] Sudan's isolation is increasing in the world. The international community is refusing to deal with Sudan following the frequent condemnations of the Khartoum government. Casper Pero [as transliterated], the human rights official in Sudan, has issued a report about human rights violations. Based on his reports, the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva has condemned the Sudanese regime for the fourth time. The General Assembly has also issued several resolutions condemning the al-Bashir government because of its human right violations. The various parliaments in the world and international human rights organizations have also condemned it, particularly following the Khartoum government's decision to broaden the civil war in the south and turn it into a religious war in the name of Islamic jihad against the Christians. The government is also taking children and students from their families for military training. It then sends them to the south to fight and kill their fellow citizens and brothers.

['Ajjaj] The NDA leadership committee has reportedly discussed some important issues pertaining to Sudan and to the situation after the fall of al-Bashir. Can you tell us something about these issues?

[Abu-'Isa] The situation in Sudan following the fall of al-Bashir and al-Turabi will be governed by the NDA charter, which was announced on 21 October 1989. The charter contains all the principles and values that should prevail in the new Sudan. Democracy will be established following the overthrow of the regime. We agreed that there should be a transition period of four years and a provisional constitution, containing the hallmarks of the new Sudan. The constitution will guarantee equal rights and responsibilities. It will also guarantee justice and equality among all the people. It will recognize and respect the different religions, customs, and cultures in Sudan. This constitution should further strengthen the unity of the people and not cause division. The democratic constitution will be based on separation between religion and politics and on the slogan that religion is for God and the country is for all.

['Ajjaj] What do you think about John Garang's position, calling for the secession of the south from the north?

[Abu-'Isa] During the recent leadership committee meeting, Dr. Garang affirmed that the SPLA's position is based on unity, justice, and equality. It is based on freedom from past policies that led the country to the edge of the abyss. He also noted that the right to self-determination does not necessarily mean secession if a just unity can be established according to the resolutions of the fateful issues' conference. I think, there will be no future for any call for self-determination or for the separation of the south from Sudan if we can implement what we agreed upon in the NDA charter, particularly during the transitional period.

['Ajjaj] How do you view the decision to refer the accusations regarding the al-Bashir regime's involvement [in President Mubarak's assassination attempt] to the Security Council?

[Abu-'Isa] We have condemned the NIF's involvement in the attempt to assassinate Egyptian President Husni Mubarak. We also condemned Khartoum's refusal to hand over the foreign and Sudanese members of the NIF, which the government is harboring. We declared our support for Ethiopia's complaint to the OAU and the Security Council against the NIF regime in Sudan. We appeal to the two bodies to impose the stiffest punishment against the NIF regime, force it to hand over the terrorists, and close the terrorist camps in Sudan to ensure the people's security and the security and stability of the neighboring countries.

['Ajjaj] What do you think about the preparation for elections in Sudan?

[Abu-'Isa] These are not elections. They are a fake play, conducted under a false constitution, which perpetuates dictatorship, repression, and terrorism.

GCC: Statement Issued at End of Ministerial Council

LD1703171896 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1250 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Riyadh, 16 Mar (SPA) — Their highnesses the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] foreign ministers have closed the meetings of the 58th session of the GCC at the general secretariate of the council in Riyadh.

The Saudi delegation was lead by the Foreign Minister Sa'ud al-Faysal.

At the end of its 58th session, the council issued the following press statement:

The ministerial council held its 58th session on 16-17 March at the GCC General Secretariate in Riyadh, under the chairmanship of His Highness Yusuf Bin Alawi Bin-'Abdallah, the Omani foreign minister and chairman of the session. [passage omitted]

It gives pleasure to the council to express deep joy and happiness for God's blessings for the recovery of Saudi King Fahd, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, praying to God Almighty to keep him in good health and for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to enjoy further prosperity and abundance under his blessed reign.

The council expresses appreciation for the faithful efforts made by the Sultanate of Oman in laying down the rules regarding the appointment of the GCC secretary general following the 16th session of the higher council that was held in Muscat where the member-states endorsed the proposal presented by the Sultanate of Oman to appoint the secretary general on the basis of alternation and in accordance with the alphabetical order of the state names, providing that this be included in the council's statute.

The ministerial council discussed Iraq's implementation of the security council resolutions related to its aggression against Kuwait. The council notes with all regret Iraq's failure to complete fundamental aspects of its international obligations as showed by decisions taken by the Iraqi regime and the latter's suspicious behavior concerning the removal of the arms of mass destruction. This regime is indeed still producing bacteriological epidemic-causing weapons liable to inflict heavy losses on Iraq itself and the region, in addition to its production of chemical and radioactive weapons.

In this respect, the council underlines the importance of backing the efforts of the UN committee in charge of removing the arms of mass destruction, and it urges all states to support these efforts materially and politically in order to guarantee the stability of the activity of the committee. The council expresses concern over attempts by the Iraqi regime to exploit some border passages to smuggle in material to develop weapons for aggression, and its obstruction of the missions of the UN inspection teams, which is a violation of UN Security Council resolution 687, and a confirmation that the Iraqi regime fails to respond to all calls for it to carry out the UN resolutions related to its aggression.

While regretting the deterioration of the living and health conditions of the fraternal Iraqi people, the council holds the Iraqi regime fully responsible for this, a result of the wrong policy it has been conducting all this time. The council stresses the need for Iraq to implement resolution 986 to benefit from this resolution's articles meant to tackle the humanitarian needs of this people, and to alleviate its cruel ordeal.

In this regard, the Council demands that the international community continues exerting its pressure on the Iraqi Government until Iraq completes the implementation of resolution 687 and other relevant international legitimacy resolutions particularly those concerning the release of Kuwaiti and other nationalities' prisoners of war and detainees whose suffering has gone on for too long as a result of a blatant violation of resolution 687 and the third and fourth Geneva conventions and until Iraq desist from any aggressive or provocative act in compliance with resolution 949 and abide by the reparations mechanism and returns all properties and proves to the international community, through its policies and practices, its peaceful intentions.

The Council stresses its total rejection of all policies aiming to encroach on Iraq's territorial safety, expressing its full concern at Iraq's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

The Ministerial Council examined the developments of relations between the states of the Cooperation Council and the Islamic Republic of Iran and the issue of its occupation of the three islands of Greater Tunb, Minor Tunb, and Abu Musa which belong to the United Arab Emirates and took note of the Iranian government's continued implementation of measures that seek to perpetuate its occupation of the three islands including the construction of an airport and opening it on the island of Abu Musa on 10 March a matter which constitutes an unjustifiable provocative step.

The Council reiterated its profound regret for Iran's lack of response to the repeated, serious, and sincere invitations from the United Arab Emirates to reach a peaceful settlement to this issue.

The Council also expressed its concern vis-a-vis Iranian government's continued measures aiming at the perpetuation and entrenching its occupation of the three islands which constitutes a violation of the sovereignty of the state of United Arab Republic, disturbs security and stability in the region and contravene with the principles of international law, the Islamic Conference Organization's charter and the principles of good-neighborliness and the respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the states of the region.

The Ministerial Council reaffirms its firm stand of backing and supporting the UAE and renews its absolute support to all peaceful measures and means taken and applied by the UAE to recover its sovereignty over the three islands; Greater Tunb, Minor Tunb and Abu Musa and calls on Iran to agree to refer the dispute to the International Court of Justice.

The ministerial council discussed the developments in the Middle East peace process. Stemming from the GCC states' firm stances in support of the Middle East peace process to reach a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region on the basis of the UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the principle of land for peace, the council expressed its great appreciation of the international efforts made towards that end, particularly those made by the United States to push the parties concerned to achieve peace at bilateral tracks.

While expressing its satisfaction at the holding of the Palestinian legislative and presidential elections and the completion of the redeployment of the Israeli army from most of the towns and villages of the West Bank in implementation of the second phase of the Palestinian self-rule accord, the council urges Israel to lift the siege imposed on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; to implement the letter and spirit of the bilateral agreements signed with the Palestinian side; to refrain from any action that may be in breach of the peace moves in the region and to begin the second phase of the negotiations on the basis of achieving full Israeli withdrawal from the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories, including holy Jerusalem, in a way that would enable the Palestinian people exercise all their legitimate rights, including the establishment of their independent state on their national soil.

The council also expresses its hope that efforts, particularly those sponsored by the United States, would be redoubled to remove the obstacles that hinder the negotiations in the Syrian-Israeli track, while stressing its full support for the Syrian stance based on achieving Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Arab Golan heights to the border line of 4 June 1967.

The council also expresses its hope that progress would be achieved in the Lebanese-Israeli track leading to the end of the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolution 425.

As far as Sharm al-Shaykh's Summit of Peacemakers was concerned, the GCC Council reiterated its great appreciations for the efforts of Egypt and in particular, those of President Husni Muhammad Mubarak for successful outcome of the meeting.

The Council reaffirmed the positive nature of the conference's results, reiterated its support for them and urged other peace-loving countries to cooperate in a positive manner and try to draw up realistic and effective measures which would help in the consolidation of the peace process in the Middle East, protect its gains and contain attempts to undermine it or harm the peace and stability of the region and its economic development.

Furthermore, the Council urged the peace co-sponsors to convene another meeting, similar to the Madrid Conference, in order to revaluate the outcome of the peace process and give it a fresh momentum which might help realize the desired goals of the peace process.

While reiterating the fact that extremism, violence and terrorism are all an international phenomena not confined to a single people or a region, the Ministerial Council would like, nevertheless, to reiterate its condemnation of such phenomena and categorical rejection of all forms of violence, particularly those aiming at harming peace and stability in the region or derailing the peace process in the Middle East.

Furthermore, the Council urges the international community to coordinate its efforts to eliminate acts of violence and terrorism and bring perpetrators to justice. Also, it urges the international community to make sure that extremists and terrorists are not using foreign territories for their supplies and arms or are given the opportunity to use their media organs to spread incitement to violence and terrorism.

While recalling the resolutions of the 16th session of the GCC supreme council that was held in Muscat regarding the regulations of external media activities and information code of honor, the council reaffirms the importance of cooperation among the GCC member-states to confront tendentious media campaigns directed against any member-state and take unified stands against them, to face up to the media organs and newspapers which undermine the GCC member-states and to refrain from providing them with any form of support, quoting or promoting them.

The ministerial council reviewed the new developments in Bosnia-Herzegovina, praised the measures taken to implement Dayton peace accord and reaffirmed the sovereignty of Bosnia-Herzegovina and its territorial integrity.

The council noted with great satisfaction the generous response of GCC citizens within the framework of their solidarity campaigns with the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina in response to the initiatives from the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and UAE President Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan in organizing donation campaigns for the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the march of reconstruction.

The council also reviewed the developments of the conflict between Yemen and Eritrea over the Hanish island and stressed the need to contain the crisis between the two countries and work to find a peaceful settlement which would serve the rights, maintain the security of the people and prevent the escalation of the conflict in consolidation of the historical relations between Yemen and Eritrea.

The council affirmed that the security of the Red Sea and securing the freedom and safety of its navigation were of a paramount importance for all the states in the region.

The council appreciates the mediation efforts made to attain an actual agreement between the Yemen and Eritrea on the necessary principle of settlement in accordance with the terms of international law and principles and goals of the UN Charter.

In the economic sphere, the council discussed the issue of customs tariffs regarding the outside world, recalled the Supreme Council's resolution passed at the 16th session on 6 December 1995 and confirmed that a meeting will be held between the Ministerial Council and the Economic and Finance Committee in June 1996 to find a solution that would conform to the content of the Unified Economic Agreement and the resolutions of the Supreme Council and have adequate flexibility to obtain the required consensus.

The council approved the executive rules of the GCC states' patenting inventions statute, and approved the fees prescribed in the patenting inventions statute. It authorized the board of directors of the invention patenting bureau to amend the list of the fees whenever required.

In the sphere of negotiations with the EU, the council discussed the joint ministerial meeting due to be held in Luxembourg in April and heard a detailed briefing by the general coordinator of the negotiations, and stressed the need to attach more importance to investment and trade exchanges between the GCC and EU states, and to provide the opportunity for the private sector to express opinion on these two issues.

The council took cognizance of the meeting held recently in Brussels at the level of experts between the GCC and EU states - meetings which were concerned with political and information dialogue - and the meetings organized for some businessmen by the European Commission and the opportunities and the benefit of the information available at the commission offered to them.

The council also reviewed the strategy and mechanism for the dialogue which had been previously discussed in Muscat on 4 November 1995 with the Economic and Finance Committee and the Standing Ministerial Committee for Petroleum Cooperation and provided the negotiating team with its instructions regarding these issues. [passage omitted].

The ministerial council expressed sincere wishes for the secretary general designate of the GCC, Jamil al-Hujaylan, to succeed in his duties, and to contribute with his experience to the strengthening of the blessed march of the GCC.

GCC: Saudi Warships Arrive in Oman for GCC Exercise

LD1703171196 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] According to the instructions of the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] defense ministers, which require the council's states to carry out military training and maneuvers between the council's countries, a group of ships from the al-Jubail-based Eastern Fleet of the Royal Saudi Marines, has sailed recently to Oman to take part in the common navy exercise "Cooperation Two."

The ships arrived yesterday at Sa'id Bin-Sultan naval base, in the sisterly Sultanate of Oman. [passage omitted]

GCC Condemns 'Evil', 'Criminal Acts' in Bahrain

LD1503200296 Riyadh SPA in Arabic
1830 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Riyadh, 15 Mar (SPA) — The Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] has strongly condemned the evil, criminal acts perpetrated in Bahrain yesterday, when innocent people were killed.

This came in a statement made today by His Excellency Shaykh Fahim Bin-Sultan al-Qasimi, GCC secretary general.

The statement expressed deep concern over the continuation of violent and terrorist acts in Bahrain.

It described the acts as evil, saying that they bear the mark of hands alien to our secure Gulf societies which reject the shedding of innocent blood regardless of motives or justifications. This stance proceeds from the teachings of Islamic law, true to God's words: "If anyone slew a person — unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land — it would be as if he slew the whole people." [Koranic verse]

The statement reiterated the clear and frank stance of the GCC member states in support of the measures that Bahrain is taking to put an end to such alien criminal acts.

Bahrain

Bahrain: 7 Suspects Detained in Restaurant Attack

NC1603122696 Paris AFP in English
1159 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, Mar 16 (AFP) - The Bahraini authorities have arrested seven suspects in the firebombing of a restaurant which killed seven Bangladeshis, an information ministry official said Saturday [16 March].

The names of the suspects and other details would be released later Saturday, the official said. Arsonists on Friday night set fire to a sports club south of Manama, causing damage but no casualties, he added.

The interior ministry said seven people were killed early Thursday when five masked men threw molotov cocktails at the restaurant in the suburb of Sitrah after dousing it with gasoline.

It was the worst attack since anti-government unrest began 15 months ago.

Bahrain has been hit by arson attacks, bombings and other violence by mainly Shiite Moslems who are calling on the Sunni-led government to restore the parliament it suspended in 1975.

Bahrain's prime minister, Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, visited the restaurant on Thursday and called for "the perpetrators of this act to be arrested quickly and put on trial."

(In a statement received by AFP in Nicosia, the exiled opposition group, the Bahrain Freedom Movement, condemned the attack which it suggested was carried out by security forces in a bid to win Western support.)

The group and witnesses also said Bahraini anti-riot units had arrested more than 400 people, including children, since the firebomb attack.

Another restaurant was firebombed hours before the Bangladeshis were killed, but its British and other clients managed to escape, witnesses said.

On Friday night, two rooms at the sports club in 'Ali, 15 kilometers (nine miles) southeast of Manama, were destroyed in a blaze which was deliberately set, the information ministry official said.

Bahrain: Freedom Movement Says 400 Arrested After Firebomb Attack

NC1503155996 Paris AFP in English
1438 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, March 15 (AFP)—Bahraini anti-riot units have arrested more than 400 people, including children, since a firebomb attack on a restaurant that killed seven people, the opposition and witnesses said Friday [15 March].

The Bahrain Freedom Movement (BFM) and witnesses contacted by telephone said most of the arrests took place in the Shiite Muslim districts of Wadiyan and Al-Ma'amir, on the island of Sitrah south of the capital.

"The anti-riot forces are carrying out an unprecedented operation of inflicting collective punishment on residents of the two districts," the BFM charged.

"They have not spared a single house, ransacking or confiscating goods and brutally molesting the residents, including children."

The opposition group condemned the firebomb attack on a Sitrah restaurant in which seven Bangladeshis were killed Thursday and called for an independent commission of inquiry, including foreign observers.

The security services carried out the attack "to gain foreign support" against the opposition in Bahrain, it charged.

Black-uniformed troops from the army's special forces, armed with machine guns, assault rifles and tear-gas guns, were deployed on Friday around the Sitrah, Jidd hafs and Sanabis districts outside Manama.

Soldiers and police were posted on the main roads into these areas and were checking identities looking for suspects.

Bahrain has been hit by arson attacks, bombings and other violence during 15 months of political unrest by Shiites who are calling on the Sunni Muslim-led government to restore the parliament it suspended in 1975.

Bahrain: Information Minister Comments on Restaurant Attack

JN1503162696 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1440 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] London, 15 Mar (WAKH) — The London-based newspaper AL-HAYAH published exclusive statements by Muhammad Ibrahim al-Mutawwa', Bahraini minister of cabinet affairs and information. Commenting on the incident in the Sitrat Wadiyan area, in which a restaurant was torched and seven people inside were killed, al-Mutawwa' said that terrorism is not an acceptable form of political expression anywhere in the world and that linking violence with political action means encouraging and inciting violence.

The minister said that the mass media must pay attention to this fact and should not be deceived by phony slogans raised by some terrorists to mislead people. The terrorists themselves, he added, do not believe in their slogans, nor do they believe in their implementation.

Bahrain: Opposition Figure Hints Government Behind Recent Attacks

NC1603193596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 16 Mar 96

[Telephone interview with Shaykh 'Ali Salman, identified as "one of the most prominent figures in the Bahraini opposition," by Mahdi Hasan; place and date not given; from the "News and Reports" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Hasan] Shaykh 'Ali Salman, according to news reports the situation in Bahrain has deteriorated in the past few days. Could you tell us what the situation is like now?

[Salman] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Actually the situation has not been calm for over a year, except during the period when ulema and university professors called for calm. That was when there was a sort of semi-agreement between the government and the opposition. However, if the government wants to monopolize decisionmaking, exclude all other parties, and use violence against them, disturbances will be likely. It is impossible to ensure complete calm unless all the parties that are active on the Bahraini scene are in agreement with each other. The recent arson against a building used by Indians—a restaurant with lodgings on top of it—was a very suspicious incident. It is not clear who did it. Some people, according to information we have received, are accusing the government of being behind the attack. The government's own version of the event was confused as to the time when the arson took place and some other details. We condemn such attacks, but we feel it is probable that the government itself is carrying out these acts to justify its savage suppression of the opposition's peaceful demands. The government used this incident as an excuse to conduct a thorough search of the villages. No less than 400 people were arrested in the past three days.

[Hasan] Shaykh Salman, the Bahraini Government alleges that the arsonists belonged to the Bahraini opposition. What is your answer?

[Salman] There is no proof. According to the government's version of events, five masked persons carried out the attack. Even if we accept this story, there is no proof that the masked men belonged to the opposition. They could have been part of the special security services who found themselves in an embarrassing position vis-a-vis the persistent but peaceful demands of the opposition. So they started a series of violent acts to justify the arrests they were carrying out. They believe that violent repression can silence the peaceful demands. They are very wrong. Judging by experience, there can be no calm and stability unless all parties operating on the national scene reach agreement with each other.

[Hasan] I understand from what you say that the Bahraini Government's accusation that young Shiite men are carrying out the attacks is simply a pretext to continue the arrests? Is that not so?

[Salman] The government is making these accusations to secure regional and international backing for its actions and to portray current events as a security problem, not as a political issue. It then carries out campaigns of oppression against activists who direct the peaceful political action of the opposition. The government wants to smother this peaceful opposition. There have been no real signs that the young men in the opposition or the public at large are carrying out the attacks. Numerous vague circumstances have surrounded the recent troubles.

[Hasan] Shaykh Salman, will the Bahraini opposition continue to use peaceful methods in pressing its legitimate demands?

[Salman] The opposition has consistently adhered to peaceful methods since it began to operate more than three years ago. Furthermore, the opposition is calling for a series of peaceful protests on 20 March to mark the passage of two months since the arrest of a group of university professors, notably the leader Shaykh 'Abd-al-Amir al-Jamri.

[Hasan] Shaykh 'Ali Salman, thank you.

[Salman] You are welcome.

Bahrain: Dailies Praise Government's Arrests of 'Terrorists'

JN1703112596 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0730 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 17 Mar (WAKH) — The newspaper AL-AYYAM issued here today asserts that terrorism, regardless of the false slogans behind it, will not escape justice. It adds: The fact that the security agencies arrested the group that perpetrated the Sitrah crime, in which seven people were killed, in a record time is an object of gratitude and appreciation on the part of all segments of society. This boosted confidence in the security measures adopted by the government in pursuing the saboteurs.

The newspaper maintains: Today, we are facing a situation in which we should not bury our heads in the sand, thus allowing the storm to pass and wreak havoc throughout the homeland. Our only option is to raise our heads high and announce our position with absolute frankness and clarity avoiding justifying what happened, now that the last masks the terrorists used to cover themselves have fallen.

The paper adds: It has become very clear that there is an insistence on escalation through various ways and means. The terrorists did not care about the souls of the innocents in their drive to achieve their goal.

Concluding, the paper says: The government's great efforts to put the situation under control are worthy of everybody's appreciation. Today, we are facing an extraordinary situation. We should join hands to overcome and realize our goal united as ever and as one family in good as well as in bad times.

For its part, AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ says: There is no doubt that these criminal actions are part of a heated campaign to suspend significant economic, political, and social issues which the leadership and people of this country seek to accomplish. Needed to fulfill this task are security, stability, and peace.

Urging deterrent punishments, the newspaper says: Given that the bloody terrorists have gone far as they have, a clear distinction should be made between violence, terrorism, and crime on the one hand, and the political and social demands on the other. These demands are being used as a cover by saboteurs, killers, and instigators of committing lowly crimes, using weapons, arson, and subversion targeting secure civilians, both citizens and residents in this homeland.

It adds: These crimes will not make real the illusionary demands of these people or those who instigate and drive them to stain their hands with the blood of innocents. These demands are used to cover their treason of the homeland and people. However, in the eyes of people, they will continue to be a gang that got used to killing and torturing victims and justified its actions by false allegations.

The paper concludes by saying: Falsehood will not triumph as long as there is vigilance and alertness. Crime will not live as long as there is loyalty, faithfulness, and cooperation among all. We are determined to fight the outlaws and betrayers.

Bahrain: Court Upholds Sentences Against Killers of Policeman

JN1703163296 Manama WAKH in English 1530 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, 17 Mar (WAKH)—The Cassation Court ruled in its session today, 17 March 1996, to uphold the death sentence against 'Isa Ahmad Hasan Qambar convicted of killing Public Security Chief Corporal Ibrahim Rashid al-Sa'idi on 22 March 1995 in the region of Nuwaydrat.

The Criminal Court had passed the death sentence and the Higher Civil Appeals Court had endorsed it.

The Cassation Court also upheld the life sentence meted out to second defendant Muhammad 'Ali Khatim al-Qadi who was convicted of being an accomplice in the crime.

It equally upheld the five-year prison terms meted out to third defendant Mansur Makki, fourth defendant Yunus Salih Musa al-Sanini, seventh defendant Ishaq Husayn Yusuf Marhun, and the eighth defendant Hamzah Habib al-Shaykh. They were convicted of assisting the first two in the crime.

The Cassation Court also upheld the acquittals of all charges of defendants Husayn Salih Musa al-Sanini, Ahmad Musa Salih al-Sanini, Husayn Muhammad 'Abd-al-Wahhab Hasan, and 'Abbas Jasim 'Abd-al-Husayn Makki.

Bahrain: Police Break Up Protests in Shiite Villages

NC1703115296 Paris AFP in English 1019 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, Mar 17 (AFP) — Club-wielding security forces broke up anti-government demonstrations in Shiite Moslem villages of Bahrain, slightly injuring some of the protestors, witnesses said Sunday [17 March].

Police jeeps and cars on Sunday patrolled several villages west of Manama, including al-Diraz and Jamrah where demonstrations had taken place Saturday night, witnesses said.

Trouble erupted in al-Diraz when protestors refused police orders to disperse, Muhammad Husayn, a resident, said, adding: "Many were wounded although not seriously."

Another resident who asked not to be named said a number of arrests were also made.

There was no immediate official comment on the protests.

Witnesses said a similar protest was also broken up Sunday in Jamrah, the home of Shaykh 'Abd-al-Amir al-Jamri, a prominent Shiite Moslem opposition leader who was arrested in January.

Political unrest erupted in December 1994 after the mainly Sunni Moslem authorities arrested a Shiite Moslem cleric, Shaykh 'Ali Salman, who demanded the restoration of parliament which was suspended in 1975.

At least 13 people were killed in rioting from December 1994 to April last year, while eight people have been killed in bombings and arson attacks that have marked a new wave of unrest that erupted in January.

Protestors lately have also renewed demonstrations and exploded gas canisters.

"Such incidents have become a daily occurrence. We want our rights restored and those arrested released immediately," Faraj Khan, a resident of Jannusan, said.

"We however condemn deliberate attacks on people. At no cost should human lives be lost," he added.

Kuwait

Kuwait: Islamic Activist Comments on Government Curbs on Movement

JN1503205196 Kuwait ARAB TIMES in English 6 Mar 96 p 4

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kuwait City, March 5 — A prominent Kuwaiti Islamic activist said he was surprised at the government's insistence in curbing the march of Islamic activism in the country, despite what he termed "historical support" of the Kuwaiti people for it.

Khalid al-Sultan, former chairman of the Islamic Heritage Revival Society, said he felt the government's outlook towards charitable activities was lacking in objectiveness and far-sighted vision.

Al-Sultan, a former parliamentarian, said it was important to back Kuwaiti interests without paying attention to the doubts of persons both inside and outside the country opposed to Kuwaiti charities.

Al-Sultan denied that Islamic movements in the country were "striving to get at the helm", and maintained that all accusations in this respect were completely baseless.

"If the Islamic currents were indeed struggling to achieve political objectives, they would have exploited the Iraqi occupation of the country to achieve their goals," he suggested, and said he was convinced that those spreading such rumours were trying to undermine Islamic movements for political gain.

"Everyone knows that the Kuwaiti Islamic movement supported the state's constitutional legitimacy during the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait," he declared.

As for Islamic preaching (dawa) al-Sultan said that did not mean "investment of office" as most preachers were not after official positions.

He said Islamic dawa in Kuwait faced certain obstacles created by some local and foreign powers, but added he was confident that the Islamic movement would managed to surmount these hurdles.

Kuwait, he said, had realised progress towards implements of Islamic sharia through the second article of the constitution which was yet to be revised.

According to that article, Islamic sharia constitutes "a major source of legislation," which Islamic movements are insisting be amended to read, "Islamic sharia is the sole source of legislation."

He suggested, however, that maintaining this article without revision did not mean that application of Islamic sharia had been "frozen."

He affirmed that Islamic dawa represented by several societies including the Islamic Heritage Revival Society was not power-hungry. Rather, it was striving to enlighten people about the importance of implementing Islamic sharia.

Kuwait: Economist Predicts 'Rampant' Unemployment

JN1603073696 Kuwait ARAB TIMES in English 9 Mar 96 p 5

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kuwait city, March 8: A prominent Kuwaiti economist has raised the spectre of rampant unemployment in Kuwait in years to come if the present situation is allowed to continue.

"Our assets will be eaten within 30 months, and then we will face real problems," economist Jasim al-Sa'dun, prophesied, in a gloomy echo of statements previously attributed also to the managing director of the Kuwait Investment Authority.

Al-Sa'dun, addressing a seminar held at the diwaniya of Dr. Sa'd Bin-Taflah warned that the job market would be flooded with nationals seeking employment and it would be difficult to accommodate them all, particularly in view of the fact that as much as 93 percent of Kuwaiti citizens were currently civil servants, with over 60 percent of the country's Kuwaiti population below 19 years of age.

This would place demands on the labour market to satisfy the aspirations of all such job seekers, he said.

"We presently suffer from unemployment, but the question is what about our position after three or four years. One might expect rampant unemployment to aggravate the sectarian and tribal divisions in the country since each individual would seek his own self-interest through the influential people in his own sect or tribe," he pointed out.

"Our current national revenues exceed U.S. $13 billion, which theoretically, should help us surpass prospective problems, but we are actually facing a genuine problem related to the administrative and political aspect," he remarked.

He recalled the country's preinvasion foreign investments were U.S. $100 billion, which had plunged at the moment to U.S. $35 billion. Besides, he said the state had been reluctant after liberation of the country to borrow loans from foreign banks, and a sum of U.S. $27 billion of such loans still remained to be settled. He said the liberation war and various other state expenditures had totalled U.S. $65 billion, which did not include foreign investment embezzlements, and post-liberation mismanagement.

But at the moment, public expenditure was estimated at 4.5 billion dinars, while the country's total revenues were at the level of 3.5 billion dinars, the difference being a deficit of one billion dinars, he lamented.

He called for an overall review of the country's current defense and security strategy, to surmount the problem. Concluding accounts of the state budget had revealed a sum of one billion dinars allocated for defense and security during the past fiscal year, which could be deemed as large if one considered that the national army comprised just 17,000 personnel, which was most incapable of accommodating the relevant sophisticated weaponry.

So, Kuwait should either emulate the Costa Rican example of having a security force without a regular army, or that of Switzerland and Israel, who rely mostly on army reservists who could be summoned when the country faced a red alert.

He was in favour of a proposal put forward by Sultan Qabus of Oman, who called for the formation of a GCC unified army to deal with any aggression that might be encountered by any one of its member states.

Al-Sa'dun called for the exclusion of exorbitant projects and rationalization of public spending to handle the state budget deficit before consideration of any kind of tax to be imposed on state-rendered services.

He said Kuwaiti private sector foreign investment was somewhere between 40 and 50 billion U.S. dollars, capital which could not be expected to return home without favourable conditions for its return.

Attempts

In the expectation that the forthcoming global struggles would be of an economic nature rather than a military one, the expert referred to attempts at Euro-unity and Japan's bids to forge an economic alliance of neighbouring states, which the United States was trying to confront.

In this context, neither Kuwait nor the GCC countries would be in a position to form any type of economic bloc for competing with existing economic blocs worldwide, he added.

Poor economic conditions prevailing in Iran and Iraq, one with a population of over 63 million and the other with over 17 million people, would pose a long-term stability threat to the region, he said, as exemplified from Cuba and Haiti, a large number of whose citizens were flooding the United States in search of economic opportunity which had aggravated the labour situation there.

Oman

Oman: Minister on Sharm al-Shaykh Summit, GCC Communique

NC1703125396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1118 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Riyadh, 17 Mar (MENA) — Yusuf Bin-'Alawi, Omani minister of state for foreign affairs, has praised the positive results of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit that the six Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] member states were eager to attend. He emphasized that these results will soon have an impact on the Middle East peace process and on curbing the wave of world terrorism.

In an exclusive statement to MENA at noon today, he said the GCC countries will very strongly support the Sharm al-Shaykh summit's results, especially the measures to combat all forms of terrorism. He added that the GCC countries will also work to ensure that the charge of terrorism is not blamed on Islam and Muslims.

In the statement he made at the end of the GCC Ministerial Council's 150th session, Bin-'Alawi stressed the six GCC member states' stand and readiness to combat all forms of terrorism in cooperation with any other country through funding, finding sheltered terrorists, or other aspects.

As chairman of the current session, the Omani minister commented on the topics discussed by the GCC during its meetings that opened in Riyadh yesterday. He said the most prominent topics in the final communique discussed the Gulf countries' collective support for Bahrain in dealing with recent rioting and subversion.

The communique includes a call for Iraq to implement UN resolutions and the Gulf countries' stand toward Iran in light of its continuing occupation of three United Arab Emirates islands. The communique also includes the GCC countries' position on developments in the Middle East peace process as a result of the peacemakers summit.

Qatar

Qatar: Foreign Minister Discusses GCC Conference

LD1703200496 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Qatari Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Jabr Al Thani has described the results of the [GCC ministerial] meeting as good.

In a statement to journalists after the meeting ended, he said: We believe in the council, and, therefore, we made active contribution and, by the wisdom of brothers, we have overcome any difficulty that exists. He expressed his thanks to the Sultanate of Oman and to Saudi Foreign Minister, HRH Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal for their efforts in that area.

Regarding the appointment of the GCC's new secretary-general, he said: Qatar's approval was obtained after the Omani proposal, and this issue has been resolved.

Regarding Qatari troops in the Peninsula Shield force, the Qatari foreign minister said that Qatari troops were originally in the Peninsula Shield Force and they have not been withdrawn from it.

In reply to a question on Qatar's withdrawal from the military maneuvers, currently being held by the GCC states, he said: That has nothing to do with protest, and it is of concern to us only in view of certain circumstances.

He said that the council had not discussed the appointment of the assistant-secretary-general for economic affairs.

He pointed out that Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres would visit Doha in the near future.

Qatar: Acceptance of Saudi as Head of Gulf Alliance Announced

NC1703114496 Paris AFP in English 1059 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Riyadh, Mar 17 (AFP) — Qatar on Sunday [17 March] accepted a decision by its Gulf Arab partners to appoint a Saudi as head of their alliance, three months after condemning the move and provoking a rare public row [sentence as received].

Qatar "accepted the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) summit's decision on the appointment of" Jamil Hujaylan as secretary general, Qatar's foreign minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Jabir Al Thani told reporters.

Qatar's amir, Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, walked out of a GCC summit in Muscat in December over the decision and pledged to boycott GCC meetings attended by al-Hujaylan, who takes up his duties in April.

The statement was given at a GCC foreign minister's meeting in Riyadh. The six-member GCC is made up of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Oman and Qatar.

Qatar: Oil Minister Questions Iraqi Return to Oil Market

LD1603112696 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1031 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait City, 16 Mar (KUNA) — In a press interview published here today, a high-level petroleum official calls on the OPEC member-countries to find a solution for the oil surplus amounting to 700,000 bpd [barrels per day], which Iraq will produce in the event of reaching an agreement with the UN. In an interview with the Kuwaiti 'AL-MU'ASHSHIR' [INDEX], Omani Oil Minister Muhammad Ahmad al-Shanfari says that the entry of Iraqi oil into the market will drown the latter, a matter which will negatively affect prices. He points out that prices may fall by $1-2 per barrel.

The Omani minister refers to the recent talks between Iraq and the UN, known as the oil for food talks, and says that if these talks are successful, Iraq will be able to produce 700,000 bpd. Al-Shanfari is of the view that this quantity is large for the international market and calls on the OPEC member-countries to move in order to find a solution to this surplus, pointing out that it is important that members should cooperate in order to absorb this quantity. He says that the annual absorbing capacity is estimated at 1 million bpd, but most of it is taken by countries outside OPEC. [passage omitted]

Yemen

Yemen Reportedly Accepts Negotiations With Eritrea on Hanish Islands

NC1703183096 Paris AFP in English
1713 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanaa, March 17 (AFP) — Yemen said Sunday [17 March] it was willing to negotiate with Eritrea on international mediation to resolve their dispute over a strategic chain of islands in the Red Sea.

France, which has mediated between the two countries, has suggested they sign an accord in principle outlining the form of the negotiations, a spokesman for Yemen's foreign ministry said.

"The Yemeni republic considers that the signing of an accord in principle envisaged by the French government, and the start of talks on the method of international mediation, constitute a step towards a resolution," the spokesman said.

The long-standing dispute between Yemen and Eritrea over the Hanish island chain erupted into armed conflict in December. Eritrea seized control of the largest island, Greater Hanish, after a three-day battle with Yemeni forces that left around 10 people dead.

The French proposal represents a compromise between the Yemeni and Eritrean positions. Sanna had demanded that the dispute be resolved in bilateral talks while Asmara wanted a hearing before the International Court of Justice at The Hague.

The Yemeni spokesman said the talks on the modalities of the negotiations could lead to bilateral discussions as well. He said the Eritrean government has already expressed its "willingness to reach a just agreement through bilateral channels or, failing that, through international mediation or at The Hague."

Iraq: Opposition Claims Saddam Shot by Guards, in 'Critical Condition'

*LD1703083996 Tehran IRNA in English
0753 GMT 17 Mar 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 17, IRNA — According to a prominent Iraqi opposition leader, Baghdad regime does not honor its commitments.

Head of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq (SAIRI), Ayatollah Mohammad Baqer Hakim, told the English daily 'TEHRAN TIMES' Sunday that the recent killings of Saddam's sons-in-law reaffirmed that the Iraqi ruler has no respect for his commitments.

Ayatollah Hakim told the paper that the barbaric killing of the sons-in-law, on February 19, will definitely deepen the gap in Iraq.

He said that based on information received from inside Iraq, after Saddam ordered the killings, he was shot by his security guards and was seriously injured. The SAIRI head added that since then the Iraqi ruler has not appeared on any live TV program and has not attended any meeting, indicating that Saddam is in critical condition.

As for his recent visit to Kuwait and talks with Kuwaiti officials, he said, "Kuwait is always subject to Iraq's invasion. However, there is deep sympathy between the people of Iraq and Kuwait..."

More on his talks in Kuwait, he said that he told the Kuwaiti officials that Saddam's hostility towards the Iraqi and Kuwaiti nations has not diminished and that the threat of the Iraqi regime will remain unless fundamental changes are introduced.

Describing his talks in Kuwait as positive, he said that Kuwait and the Islamic Republic of Iran were the only two countries to extend humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people.

Iraq: Oil Talks With UN Faltering Over Northern Supplies

*MM1503162096 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
15 Mar 96 pp 1, 6*

[Report by Raghidah Dirgham: "Negotiations Between Iraq and United Nations Come to a Head Because of North and Kurds"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] New York — AL-HAYAH has learned that the negotiations between the United Nations and the Iraqi Government over the implementation of the oil-for-food formula on the basis of Resolution 986 have gone critical because of the continued disagreement over the issue of purchasing food supplies, medicines, and sanitary materials for the three northern governorates and the distribution of these supplies, even though the talks have almost been completed on the other questions, including the question of pumping oil through the pipelines passing across Turkey.

Informed sources have said that 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, head of the Iraqi delegation, wanted yesterday to hand to Hans Corell, head of the UN delegation and legal adviser to the UN secretary general, an official letter containing the text of an agreement reached between Iraq and Turkey.

According to the sources, the two sides have completed the bulk of the clauses of the draft memorandum of understanding known as the "no-paper," which sets conditions for and specifies ways of selling quantities of oil worth $1 billion every 90 days for six months to meet urgent humanitarian needs in Iraq, provided that $130 million to $150 million are allocated to the Kurds as stipulated by Resolution 986. [passage omitted]

Iraq: Baghdad Reportedly Drops 'Major Reservation' on Oil-for-Food Deal

*MM1803123396 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT
in Arabic 16 Mar 96 pp 1, 4*

[Report by Khalil Matar: "UN Diplomatic Sources Tell AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: Iraq Abandons Major Reservation in Resolution 986 Negotiations"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] New York — Well-informed diplomatic sources at the United Nations have told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that Iraq has abandoned one of its main reservations about the elements of Resolution 986, namely the reservation concerning mainly its wish to be paid the production costs for the oil to be exported, just as Turkey is paid for pumping the oil across it.

Iraq had demanded that $2 (or $2 in kind) be deducted from the price of every barrel to cover production costs, and that these sums be separate from the total sum specified in Resolution 986 ($1 billion every six months).

However, the sources warned against assuming that this development means that Baghdad's acceptance and implementation of the resolution are imminent. Because the main reservation which Iraq cannot abandon totally is the one concerning how to allocate the money, purchase humanitarian supplies, and distribute them in the north. Baghdad's position on this matter has not changed. [passage omitted]

Iraq: 'Additional' Session of 'Dialogue' With UN 18 Mar

JN1603091696 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0840 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] United Nations, 16 Mar (INA)—It was decided at the United Nations that the delegations of Iraq and the UN General Secretariat will hold an additional session as part of the sessions of dialogue on oil for food, medicine, and other basic needs on Monday [18 March].

The two delegations held a working session late last night to discuss matters related to this issue. Prior to last night's session, Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, head of the Iraqi delegation, said that the delegation will do its best to accomplish the mission assigned to it.

Iraq: Vice President Ramadan Receives UNHCR Official

JN1603130596 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1140 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 16 Mar (INA)—Vice President Taha Yasin Ramadan received Shamsol Bari [name as transliterated], head of the Southwest Asia, North Africa, and Middle East Department at the UN High Commission for Refugees [UNHCR].

Ramadan asserted that Iraq's positive treatment of the refugee issue stems from the principled humanitarian position of the glorious 17-30 July revolution regarding man and human freedoms and rights. This positive treatment also stems from Iraq's adherence to the international charters which give guidelines for dealing with refugees.

He also pointed to the distinguished humanitarian way by which Iraq dealt with the POW's during the Iraq-Iran war. These POW's actually received positive humanitarian treatment.

The vice president added that Iraq asserted its serious cooperation with the international organizations concerned with refugee issues. This stems from Iraq's consistent humanitarian principles, its respect for human rights and freedoms, and its eagerness to spread stability and security.

The UNHCR official expressed thanks for the continued positive cooperation shown by Iraqi circles regarding refugees. He also voiced high appreciation for this distinguished cooperation which affirms Iraq's adherence to its principled humanitarian positions, as well as Iraq's positive cooperation with international organizations and its respect for international charters and laws. The meeting was attended by Dr. 'Abdallah Babakr Sa'id, head of the UNHCR mission in Iraq.

Iraq: Baghdad Reportedly 'Displeased' With Jordan Minister's Statements

JN1803114596 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 18 Mar 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Iraqi Displeasure at al-Mu'ashshir's Statements"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Well-informed Iraqi sources said that the Iraqi Government is displeased with the recent statements by Information Minister Marwan al-Mu'ashshir.

The sources told AL-MAJD that al-Mu'ashshir's recent statements on allowing foreign aircraft to overfly southern Iraq are not based on any of the UN resolutions. The sources pointed out that the UN resolution which al-Mu'ashshir referred to in his statements on Monday [11 March] is Resolution 949, which is only related to the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from the Kuwaiti borders and does not include any article on overflying southern Iraq.

Iraq: Egyptian Lawyers' Issue 'Ultimatum' to King Husayn Over Iraq

JN1503131796 Baghdad AL-'IRAQ in Arabic 20 Jan 96 pp 1,6

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo — exclusive dispatch — Arab and foreign news agencies as well as Egyptian papers carried dispatches on 7 February saying that a group of Egyptian lawyers have filed a court case against King Husayn and issued an ultimatum to him for his attitude toward Iraq and his call for its division. The dispatches published by Egyptian papers say that the lawyers have filed their ultimatum with the Cairo court of first instance and called on King Husayn to stop interfering in the internal affairs of Iraq.

The dispatch published by the Egyptian paper AL-TADAMUN says that the Egyptian lawyers asked King Husayn not to host or organize any anti-Iraq conferences. The lawyers also asked King Husayn not to interfere in the internal affairs of Iraq, since it is a unified, stable country. The following is what came in the ultimatum which was submitted by the Egyptian lawyers:

Arabs are not satisfied with what they did to fraternal Iraq in 1991 by helping the enemies of the Arab and Islamic nation attack and try to liquidate the Iraqi people after having destroyed their infrastructure and military power. So, the cautioned party, King Husayn Bin-Talal, came up with this strange, satanic concept to restore an era, which was buried for good by time and intellectual factors and the Arab popular awakening.

To realize his persistent objective, the cautioned party and descendant of the Hashemite family fabricated several loose excuses which he believes are strong evidence and which he can harp on and use to achieve his expansionist aim to establish his influence on the land of the two rivers. He pursued a twisted method to avoid the facts and reality in order to achieve his plan and fulfill his hidden dream to annex the Republic of Iraq to place it under his rule and domain under strange colonialist names and terms which he called confederation and federal union.

Therefore, we as Arab citizens who have been hurt by this destructive ambition represented by the cautioned party's call for the establishment of a confederation between him and Iraq contrary to the provisions and laws of the United Nations on the independence of states and the impermissibility of imposing unity by force. In view of the cautioned party's designs, the claimants who feel threatened by the cautioned party's desire to jeopardize the security of the Arab nation in general, and Egyptian security in particular, request him to stop hosting or organizing any anti-Iraq conferences. They also call upon the cautioned party not to interfere in the internal affairs of Iraq, which belongs to its people and leadership and nobody else. If he truly wants to end the suffering of the Iraqi people, he should use his influence in international forums and rally peoples in this direction.

Consequently, I the filer, have alerted the cautioned party to this ultimatum for his information so that he will implement what is contained in it. I warned him: Failure to implement what is contained in it will compel the cautioners to pursue all legal measures and file a case against him.

Iraq: U.S. Said 'Afraid' of Farrakhan Exposing 'Genocide' Policy

JN1603212796 Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 27 Feb 96 pp 1-2

[From the "Viewpoint" column by Chief Editor Salah al-Mukhtar: "Why Is It That the Clinton Administration Cannot Carry Out an Investigation of Farrakhan?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The report published in AL-JUMHURIYAH today on the statements by Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam Movement in the United States, about his visits to Iraq and other countries in the region and his challenge to the U.S. Government to investigate these visits are important and contain significant meanings that must not be allowed to pass without a proper comment on them.

During Farrakhan's visits to Iraq, Iran, and Libya, the U.S. Government said that he was visiting states that are hostile to the United States and that he would stand trial when he returned. So, now Farrakhan is back in the United States, speaking with a loud, defiant voice and declaring his readiness to face any investigation the U.S. Government may carry out.

The logical question that must be asked is: Why is Farrakhan speaking with open defiance to the U.S. Government? Farrakhan's power stems from the fact that he has categorical proof that U.S. Government policy toward Iraq is a criminal and one that no human being with a bit of conscience can accept. Therefore, if carried out, the investigation threatened by the U.S. Government would turn into a trial of the U.S. officials who willfully killed hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children, old people, and women in cold blood. No matter how biased it is toward Zionism and hostile toward Iraq, Arabs, and Muslims, the U.S. media would not miss the opportunity to cover a sensational event that would attract the attention of the U.S. and world public — namely, the investigation of Louis Farrakhan.

Of course, Farrakhan is fully aware of this fact and knows very well that any investigation of him would work in his favor, not the U.S. Government's. It would also reveal U.S. crimes and the U.S. Administration's violation of basic human rights, its encroachment on other countries' sovereignty, and its exposing an entire population to the danger of annihilation through complete siege. Therefore, Farrakhan is in a defiant mood and hopes that he will be submitted for trial or investigation. He is ready to go to prison for the sake of seizing the opportunity to pull down the high wall of silence that the U.S. Administration has imposed on the American people, rendering incapable of understanding the fact that their government is committing genocide [last word transliterated from English] in Iraq and is encroaching on other nations and peoples in a boorish manner.

During his visit to Iraq, Farrakhan was briefed on the enormity of the Iraqi people's suffering. He was stunned by the barbarism of his government and announced without hesitation that he will expose this barbarism as soon as he returned and that he will rally the public against the U.S. Government's criminal policy toward the Iraqi people, as described recently by Ramsey Clark. He will begin by rallying the 20 million black Americans who, he said, are still suffering from racial discrimination.

Therefore, the figures and facts which are in the possession of Farrakhan will be an effective weapon in the U.S. arena, if he gets a real opportunity to reveal them. For, there is not a better opportunity than a public trial or an investigation with him, since they would take place in an atmosphere of curiosity and sensation, which are among the main rules governing the media in the United States. This would put Farrakhan in a position to expose the U.S. criminal policy toward Iraq.

Farrakhan's defiance becomes even more important when we consider the fact that the United States is currently witnessing primary election campaigns. Thus, the Clinton administration, which is embroiled in genocide against the Iraqi people, is afraid that its crimes will be exposed and exploited in the election campaign against it.

In light of this, we can understand the reasons behind Farrakhan's defiant language. He is powerful, while the U.S. Government is weak and seeks to maintain the blackout on the American people. We are also inclined to believe that the U.S. Government will try to get out of the dilemma of threatening to take Farrakhan to court on charges of treason by pursuing other face-saving means, such as simply asking Farrakhan to testify before a Congressional subcommittee or asking him to register as an agent for a foreign state, since U.S. laws permit any citizen to defend another state if he registers himself as its official agent.

The real meaning of this U.S. stand would be a tacit condemnation of U.S. policy. If it did not believe that its policy toward Iraq is criminal and contrary to the most fundamental human rights and the major articles of the U.S. Constitution, the U.S. Government would not have been afraid of Farrakhan's threats. It would have arrested him immediately after he returned and referred to him to court on treason charges, as it had announced and threatened to do.

Iraq: Senior Official on Husayn Kamil, Ties With Syria, KDP

JN1803132896 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 18 Mar 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] A senior Iraqi official expressed his satisfaction with the results of talks held by 'Isam Huwaysh, Governor of the Iraqi Central Bank, with a number of senior Syrian officials on various suspended financial matters between Syria and Iraq. The Iraqi official, who passed through Jordan recently, told AL-MAJD that Huwaysh, who visited Damascus at the beginning of last week, returned to Baghdad with positive impressions of the talks he held with Syrian officials on both the political and economic levels.

The Iraqi official expressed optimism over an imminent agreement with the Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] led by Mas'ud Barzani after taking a good initiative represented by facilitating the travel of Iraqi Oil Minister Lieutenant General 'Amir Rashid to and from Turkey through the Kurdish territory. The Iraqi official added that Barzani asked his party members to receive Lt. Gen. Rashid and to accompany him through the Kurdish areas during his recent visit to Turkey to hold talks on opening the pipeline which will carry Iraqi oil once an agreement is reached between Iraq and the United Nations.

The senior Iraqi official disclosed to AL-MAJD that Rolf Ekeus, official in charge of removing Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, asked for a meeting with General Husayn Kamil on the eve of his return to Baghdad. The official said that Ekeus, who sent an urgent cable to the Iraqi Government requesting an immediate meeting with Gen. Husayn Kamil, did not reveal the reason of this meeting which was disapproved by the Iraqi leadership.

The Iraqi official said: Gen. Kamil left the guest house [in Baghdad] and sought refuge at his sister's house where he summoned members of his family. This prompted his cousin [former Iraqi Defense Minister] 'Ali Hasan al-Majid to lead a delegation from his tribe to the house of Husayn Kamil's sister to ask Gen. Kamil why he left the guest house. However, Saddam Kamil, who was annoyed by his divorce from his wife [Saddam's daughter], refused to come to an understanding and resorted to arms. He shot and killed Tha'ir 'Abd-al-Ghafur.

The Iraqi official told AL-MAJD: God be my witness, the sons of Husayn and Saddam Kamil were not harmed. They are living with their mothers, Raghad and Rana, under the custody of Qusayy, Saddam Husayn's second son.

Iraq: Saddam Orders Cancellation of Ear Amputation Penalty

JN1703115696 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1116 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 17 Mar (INA)—President Saddam Husayn ordered the cancellation of the penalty of cutting off the outer ear of military service deserters and shirkers.

AL-QADISIYAH, which specializes in military affairs, cited Major General 'Adnan 'Imran, director of the Legal Department at the Defense Ministry, as saying: In light of the order of President Saddam Husayn, commander in chief of the Armed Forces, it was decided to release the military service deserters and shirkers after they have paid a 500,000-dinar bail and attended a 27-day military preparation course for psychological, intellectual, and national rehabilitation. He added that President Saddam Husayn's order will also apply to current army deserters.

Iraq: Columnist Refutes Claims About Drop in Agricultural Prices

JN1603081396 Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 12 Feb 96 pp 1,2

["Viewpoint" column by Chief Editor Salah al-Mukhtar: "What About Agricultural Products?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] For some time now, certain hostile quarters to the Iraqi people have been trying to deepen Iraqi farmers' concerns by saying that the drop in prices would make their agricultural products unprofitable, or claiming that in the coming months Iraq would be importing wheat and other grain from abroad and that the government would not be purchasing these crops any more from Iraqi farmers. These stories are being fabricated by people obviously angered by the fact that Iraq is forging ahead with its policy to alleviate the suffering of its people first by completely lifting the economic embargo soon, as the signs are so evident to everyone far and near.

The dialogue between Iraq and the United Nations is proceeding smoothly and positively as everyone admits. The technical issues, which have been and will continue to be discussed until this weekend (which begins today in the West), are being resolved one after the other. Therefore, the enemies of the Iraqi people and those who seek to prolong their suffering have nothing else to do but spread rumors and make statements which cannot withstand facts and events.

The story that agricultural products will not be profitable following the hike in the value of the dinar seems to ignore two basic facts: First, the determination of the leadership, headed by leader President Saddam Husayn, to back agriculture and farmers by every means, especially by offering good prices for their products to provide a strong motivation to continue to work despite any change in the conditions. Second, this hike in the value of the dinar will not harm farmers for one obvious economic reason, which is understood by the ordinary layman — namely, that any drop in prices will not be limited to agricultural products causing a loss to farmers alone, but will affect all products without any exception. This means that the farmer who sells wheat for a specific sum will be able to use this sum to purchase goods and services with the same purchasing power if not more than what he used to do in the past. For example, the car which he used to buy for not less than 16 million dinars is now fetching 3 million dinars. Therefore, the revenues from agricultural products will definitely remain very profitable for the farmer.

The other story that importing agricultural products from abroad after the conclusion of the dialogue would make the government stop purchasing Iraqi agricultural products or fix lower prices for them than their actual coast, is an evil claim for two reasons: First, the Iraqi people's need for food and agricultural products is very great, which means that it would be necessary to purchase all Iraqi agricultural products and import more to meet all public needs. Therefore, there is no conflict between continuing to depend on local agricultural products and importing additional products from abroad. This is a very clear matter.

The second and most important reason is that government strategy is based on implementing leader President Saddam Husayn's slogan of making agriculture a lasting resource. Oil might dry up one day, but the land will remain alive and productive, making agriculture an eternal source of prosperity to back industry. Agriculture is more important than oil in the long term. Therefore, encouraging and backing farmers is a basic aim which cannot be abandoned, even if the cost of Iraqi agricultural products is higher than that of similar imported products, which is not the case any way. Iraqi products are cheaper, and reclaiming and cultivating Iraqi lands from the north to the south calls for continuous state assistance for farmers, not only by providing seeds, fertilizers, etc., but also by offering attractive prices to them so that they will continue to produce until we achieve self-sufficiency in food and move to the stage of exporting food.

This strategic aim alone makes the state determined to back farmers strongly and unhesitatingly and to safeguard their legitimate privileges and offer more incentives which ensure the profits they deserve.

Finally, we must say that the Iraqi farmer knows now more than ever that his fate and that of his wealth as well as his prosperity are dependent on the Iraqi people's success in lifting the embargo. The first condition for that is to be fully aware of the malicious games by Iraq's well-known enemies.

Israel: Cabinet Reaffirms Closure; PA Employment Fund Announced

TA1703110296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The cabinet has decided to retain the closure in its present format, at the same time permitting the transfer of food into the autonomy.

The cabinet further decided to set up a fund that will raise $100 million from EU members to be used to create jobs and supply food for the autonomy.

Our correspondent Gil Litman reports that Shin Bet chief 'Ami Ayalon, who heads the counterterror command, assesses that Palestinian Authority [PA] Chairman 'Arafat has not done everything he can against terror, although he is working in the right direction.

[Reporting on Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1000 GMT on 17 March, political correspondent Udi Segal adds: "At the meeting, Shim'on Peres brought up the option of deporting Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] activists. Ministers Shahal, Aloni, Sarid, and Tzaban announced that they oppose deportations, and Attorney General Mikha'el Ben-Ya'ir said a separate discussion of the issue was mandatory to render it acceptable under High Court criteria.]

The prime minister will inform the cabinet of the appointment of a new Mosad chief at next week's cabinet meeting. Speaking with our correspondent, ministers reiterated their opinion that Major General Dani Yatom is Shim'on Peres' preferred candidate.

Israel: Cabinet Discusses Situation in Territories

TA1703170296 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1400 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres declared at this morning's cabinet session that the closure would continue but that Israel had an obligation to prevent a state of hunger in the territories. Peres promised that an international fund would be established to immediately start collecting money in order to create jobs in the territories for the Palestinians. Our political correspondent Udi Segal reports on today's cabinet session.

[Begin recording] [Segal] If the Palestinians were taking the necessary steps against terrorism, I would continue lifting the closure, Peres said. I refuse, however, to take any risks, the prime minister explained. Nevertheless, at today's cabinet session, Peres announced several measures designed to stave off hunger in the territories. Among these is the supply of foodstuffs, humanitarian aid, and drugs, as well as permission to export agricultural products in truck convoys which will undergo thorough inspections. Peres told the ministers about an international initiative to establish an aid fund of between $100 and $150 million to create immediate sources of employment inside the Gaza Strip. Meretz Minister Yosi Sarid criticized the closure policy.

[Sarid] The closure is imperative from the security aspect and must be continued. To my regret, however, closures are occasionally imposed in an uncalculated manner. It is as though it came by surprise each time. The closure is also imposed in such a way as to precipitate its own lifting. The resulting impression is that of a policy of just alternately opening and closing the borders.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1500 GMT on 17 March reports that "the cabinet rejected a proposal by Minister Sarid to open Israel's emergency warehouses in order to provide basic commodities to the Palestinians under closure. The opposition to this proposal was led by Finance Minister Shohat."]

[Segal] The cabinet session began with a briefing by Shin Bet head 'Ami Ayalon who updated the ministers on the activities of the supreme counterterrorism command established to fight suicide terrorism. The Shin Bet head said that Yasir 'Arafat was taking more efficient steps but that this is still not enough. Israel is still demanding that 'Arafat arrest several key figures, particularly Muhammad Dayf.

[Public Security Minister Moshe Shahal] We are waiting to see how 'Arafat will deal with three or four leaders of the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] military wing, 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam, in the Gaza Strip. Their names are well known. The test of the Palestinian Authority [PA] will be in genuinely arresting and prosecuting these men, and not merely putting on a show.

[Segal] Peres added that if Muhammad Dayf is not arrested, and the threat of a terrorist attack originating in Hebron remains in force, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] will not continue its redeployment in the area.

Peres also discussed the deportation of Hamas activists. I do not know of any worse punishment than destroying houses or deportations, Peres said. The attorney general hastened to demand a special debate on this issue, since in his opinion the High Court of Justice will not allow deportations. Meretz Minister Shulamit Aloni agreed with Peres that these two measures were the ultimate punishment. Aloni asked the prime minister how he could explain the destruction of houses in the territories to schoolchildren, while the home of Barukh Goldstein [Jewish settler who killed 29 Palestinians at the Cave of Patriarchs in February 1994] was untouched. Peres, referring to 'Arafat's visit to Yahya 'Ayyash's family, replied: The Israeli prime minister did not come to Goldstein's home to express his condolences. Aloni continued: The rabbis encouraged Goldstein's family and turned him into a martyr.

[A similar report on Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1505 GMT on 17 March adds that Prime Minister Peres said that "the PA, in its behavior, actually forces us to take these steps. Peres enumerated the sins of the PA and the Palestinian populace. Peres spoke about 'Arafat's jihad speeches, as well as the PA leader's condolence visit to the home of terrorist Yahya 'Ayyash; noted the expressions of joy in the territories following the recent terrorist attacks; and criticized the PA's tendency to arrest fugitives and then release them after a short time. Peres revealed that Muhammad Dayf, the No. 1 fugitive, was within the grasp of the Palestinian security services but that they did not arrest him. Moreover, Peres asserted at today's cabinet session that the Gaza Strip is the source of all the evil. How can Muhammad Dayf remain in hiding for so long, the prime minister wondered?"]

The ministers were not left in suspense with regard to the expected appointment of a new head for the Mosad, since they had already read in all the papers that the leading candidate for the job was Major General Dani Yatom. Peres, however, told them that the appointment would only be announced next week. [end recording]

Israel: Additional Steps Announced To Ease Closure

TA1503142996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1400 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The closure imposed on the territories has been eased further. The internal ban on traffic between Arab settlements in the West Bank, which was lifted this morning, will not be reimposed except for the al-Fawwar refugee camp, near Hebron, and the village of Burqa, near Nabulus, from where the suicide terrorists departed on their mission.

The external closure which prevents Palestinians from traveling from the territories to Israel will remain in effect; however, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] will allow Arab laborers to work in Judaea and Samaria industrial zones after they receive the appropriate permits from the Civil Administration.

Major General Ilan Biran, commander of the Central Command, announced the above steps during a meeting with the heads of the Palestinian Preventive Security Service. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that the meeting lasted some four hours and included sharp exchanges between the parties. Gen. Biran told our correspondent that he made it clear to the Palestinians that the IDF will take every step necessary to fight terrorism and will fight it ceaselessly. We have no problem with either the Palestinian people or Islam, but we are against the madmen who carry out acts of terror. The IDF will not restrict its activities against them in any way, the general said.

Israel: Closure Linked to Arrest of 'Terrorists'

TA1803063696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0405 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A senior defense source has said that Israel will continue to exert constant pressure on 'Arafat until he wakes up and seriously begins fighting terror. The defense establishment will reassess the lifting or a tangible easing of the closure only if 'Arafat arrests leading terrorists Muhammad Dayf and Hasan Salamah. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports:

[Ben-Menahem] This is 'Arafat's trial week, a senior defense source said. Israel has eased the closure on the territories in several areas, particularly humanitarian and economic ones: Sick people are being allowed to enter Israel for medical treatment after undergoing security checks, food is entering the Gaza Strip without any hindrance, agricultural produce is being allowed to leave for the port of Ashdod, and the internal closure has been lifted in Judaea and Samaria. There will be no compromises, however, in the security area and in the war on terror, the senior defense source said. He added that thousands of Palestinians employed in Israel will not be allowed to enter the country and that the external closure will not be removed until 'Arafat arrests Dayf and Salamah, the heads of the terrorist snake. If they are arrested, the source asserted, the defense establishment will reassess its position on the closure.

To date, 'Arafat has not displayed any special determination with regard to the war on terror. He arrested several wanted men on the list Israel gave him, but they were not even brought to trial. The senior defense source said that 'Arafat portrays himself to international public opinion as a wretched man who, along with his people, is suffering serious famine; however, internally, he depicts himself as a hero, likening the closure to the siege on Beirut and saying that he will not surrender — thus scoring points without really fighting terror. Nonetheless, the senior source said, Israel will not relent and will continue to exert constant pressure on 'Arafat until he understands that he cannot have his cake and eat it, too, and that he must arrest Dayf and Salamah.

The redeployment in Hebron has been frozen and now hinges on the war on terror. There are no contacts on political and civilian issues, and the high tension in relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority persists. The defense source estimated that 'Arafat will eventually wake up and realize that he cannot enjoy the best of both worlds. If he fails to do so, the source said, the entire peace process will be jeopardized.

Israel: Shahal on Lebanon, Hamas Funding, Closure

TA1603124496 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0700 GMT 16 Mar 96

[Telephone interview with Public Security Minister Moshe Shahal by Shlomi Stein; place not given; from the weekly "In the Current Situation" program — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Stein] Good morning, Public Security Minister Moshe Shahal.

[Shahal] Good morning.

[Stein] Before discussing the events of the last week, let me briefly ask you about south Lebanon. Has Israel's restraint come to an end?

[Shahal] I think that if Israel fails to teach Hizballah a lesson, the terrorists will perceive this as weakness. This perception will only encourage them to show greater daring, especially because Hizballah has clear political goals: to try to prove to the United States and Israel that the international counterterrorism summit has not affected their activities. As a result of this, the terrorists are receiving more funding from Iran.

[Stein] The question is whether Israel has an interest in heating up the border sector?

[Shahal] It is not a question of heating things up. We have a supreme obligation to protect our soldiers' lives. No one wants to heat up the sector, but one cannot ignore a situation that could ultimately lead to greater danger if Israel acts in a way Hizballah may perceive as a lack of capability or of the desire to retaliate.

[Stein] Let us discuss the events of the past week. The Sharm al-Shaykh summit is over. The U.S. President and the CIA director visited Israel. The CIA director is still in the country. What operative changes have followed all this?

[Shahal] I hope to see changes in several very important fields. For example, the readiness shown by the various intelligence services to cooperate and dry up the money sources of Hizballah, Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], and all the other radical terrorist organizations is of tremendous significance. We have sought such cooperation for a very long time while trying unsuccessfully to convince the rest of the world of the need to stop the flow of funds to the terrorists. The second thing, as far as Israel is concerned, is the $100 million in aid and the delivery of sophisticated equipment which we wanted to purchase in the past but could not afford. I assume we would have been denied access to some of this equipment in the past even had we had the money.

[Stein] Can you assure Israeli citizens that they have a higher level of personal security today than they did a week ago?

[Shahal] The level of security is definitely higher. I would like to clarify, however, that some of these steps are just at the beginning. For example, the degree of cooperation in the future between the 13 Arab states who participated in the international summit, Israel, and the West can only be examined with the passage of time. If there is real cooperation with the aim of denying aid, money, and refuge to the terrorist organizations, then I believe we will be able to significantly curtail their freedom of action.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0705 GMT on 16 March carries a related interview with Public Security Minister Moshe Shahal by Yoram Ronen. When asked about the level of Iran's direct involvement in terrorist activity in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, Shahal replies: "We know about Iranian involvement in two fields: financing, to the tune of tens of millions of dollars, and also training. Some of the terrorists were trained in Sudan. A number of these people received money from various charitable associations. The issue of the money transfers is very difficult and complex, because the money is not sent directly. Some of it comes from the United States through licensed charities which are ostensibly engaged in humanitarian activities. There are centers in Chicago and Houston. They are known to us. This money is then transferred to the United Kingdom, which serves as a clearing house for the money transfers. Some of the funds flow through Germany to charitable associations here whose formal activities are legitimate. These associations, however, serve as a cover for aid to the Hamas military wing."

[Shahal adds: "I flew to the United States and the United Kingdom and spoke personally with all the officials in charge of these matters, especially in the United Kingdom. I tried to convince them that there is room for restrictive legislation. I particularly urged them to provide us with information to enable us to determine the sources of these funds and their intended use. I held polite and professional meetings. We also sent legal memos to the relevant officials. It should be recalled that the British and Israeli legal systems are very similar. We proposed joint legislative amendments. In the wake of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, I hope it will be possible to dry up the sources of funding for the terrorist organizations and I also proposed this at the cabinet session with President Clinton."

[When asked whether the cabinet, in its 17 March session, may decide to ease the closure, Shahal replies: "In my opinion, there will be no easing of the closure until the security situation clears up and until we ascertain that the Palestinian Authority has arrested the top leaders of the Hamas military wing. At any rate, I will oppose any easing of the closure. I believe that relaxing the closure and permitting the uncontrolled entry of Palestinians into Israel under the present conditions, without a comprehensive separation plan, constitutes a security risk."]

[Stein] Let us move on to party issues. The Sharm al-Shaykh conference was held this week. Shim'on Peres' vision of the new Middle East appeared on every television screen and newspaper. We saw the Arab leaders meeting with our prime minister. President Clinton visited Israel, and no President has ever displayed such warmth toward us. Nevertheless, the Labor Party has still not regained its impressive lead in the polls.

[Shahal] The polls indicate that Labor enjoys solid public backing. Most of the public is intelligent and realizes that there are no miracle cures. Therefore, despite the shocking scenes from the horrendous terrorist attacks, support for the peace process, for Shim'on Peres as prime minister, and for Labor has stabilized. I find this a very pleasant surprise. After all, we are speaking about very emotionally charged events. This has an effect. I think that the Israeli public has wised up. The Likud and Binyamin Netanyahu may have Tzomet and Gesher but they do not have a political path, and I believe that this will be the primary issue facing the Israeli voter.

[Stein] Nevertheless, the gap between Peres and Netanyahu is not as wide as it was before the recent wave of terrorist attacks.

[Shahal] I have no doubt that the Israeli public is divided into firmly consolidated blocs. The floating vote is relatively small. I am highly encouraged, however, by the very fact that Labor and the peace process which it launched have such wide support following such incidents. I am convinced that the public, when called upon to vote, will express its support for the policies of Shim'on Peres' government. [passage omitted]

[Stein] One last question on a lesser issue: Will you again shut down half the country for half a day the next time the U.S. President or some other senior foreign official comes to visit?

[Shahal] Look, I am very sorry about this, and I would like to apologize to the citizens of Israel. The security measures taken were very necessary. I can now reveal that while Clinton was here, we received two warnings by telephone about an intention to attack him and his entourage. We could not ignore any warning, especially in view of the fact that we are in an area where the elements against which the conference was held constantly operate. There was a security need to do this, and we tried to make it as painless as possible. Still, we are a small country with few alternate roads. I would like to express my appreciation to the Israeli public for being so understanding and would like to thank the policemen, who did an extraordinary job.

[Stein] Could you be more specific about those two warnings?

[Shahal] We received warnings over the phone of an intention to carry out a terror attack.

[Stein] They were anonymous calls?

[Shahal] Yes, of course. Well, the caller said he was speaking on behalf of the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam squads. We even managed to trace one of the calls to the phone from which it was made but failed to apprehend the caller.

[Stein] Where was it made from?

[Shahal] The Jerusalem area.

[Stein] Inside Israeli territory?

[Shahal] Well, in between.

[Stein] And could you not fly the President from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv by helicopter?

[Shahal] This is a good opportunity for me to say that it is absolutely forbidden to fly the President, even in the United States. The U.S. security personnel would not allow him to be flown on helicopters for security reasons which are obvious. It is much easier to shoot down a helicopter than to hit a car from the ground. That is why this is simply out of the question.

Israel: Goods To Move Via Qarni, Workers Allowed Into Erez

TA1603112696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] There will be a further easing of the closure on the Gaza Strip. From tomorrow morning, goods will be permitted to leave the Gaza Strip through the Qarni checkpoint. The goods will be transported on trucks that will undergo thorough security inspections and be accompanied to their destination by the security forces.

Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that the defense establishment has also authorized the resumption of activities at the Erez industrial zone. From tomorrow morning, workers from the Gaza Strip will be permitted to work at factories in the industrial zone.

Israel: Security Sources—No Food Shortage in Gaza

TA1803095496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Security sources say that ever since the easing of the closure on the territories, Israel has delivered to the Gaza Strip through the Qarni crossing some 1,500 tonnes of foodstuffs, such as flour, barley, rice, and milk, for the local population. Israel has also allowed 640 tonnes of flour from Egypt to enter the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing.

The sources told our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem that there is no shortage of food whatsoever in the Gaza Strip and that, at the moment, the Palestinians are not demanding any additional food staples either.

Israel: Peres—No Knowledge of Mosad Agents in Syria

TA1803105696 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1000 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said today that Israel is still waiting for Syria to denounce the latest wave of terrorist attacks. In a meeting with children from Kibbutz Alummot, to which Peres belonged in his youth, the prime minister said Damascus must stop serving as a terrorist center before the negotiations can be resumed. Uri Gordon reports.

[Begin recording] [Gordon] The prime minister hosted a group of bar mitzvah boys and girls from Kibbutz Alummot, near Lake Tiberias. Aside from discussing Passover preparations, however, the youths aroused surprise by coming up with a list of tough questions about terrorism, peace, elections, and the state of the Israeli-Syrian talks.

[Peres] There is a suspension in the talks with Syria because the United States asked Syria for two things: to denounce terrorism or at least express condolences about the fatalities, and to stop serving as a terrorist center. We are awaiting the Syrian response.

[Gordon] Peres also left some time for correspondents' questions. Naturally, he did not confirm the report about the capture of two Mosad agents in Syria. I read about it in the newspaper, and I do not know anything further, he said.

Will the prime minister intervene in the disputes between Ministers Ehud Baraq and Hayim Ramon?

[Peres] There is no need. They are both adult and smart, and I am sure they will find a way to live and work together.

[Gordon] Peres received an enticing proposal from the young Alummot members: to follow in Ben-Gurion's path and return to the kibbutz when he retires.

[Peres] Do you have room? It is a very good idea. [end recording]

Israel: Syrian, Iranian Ties to Terror Detailed

TA1503135896 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT [LESHABAT supplement] in Hebrew 15 Mar 96 pp 6-9

[Article by Smadar Peri: "Damascus Also Has Plans To Attack Husayn and 'Arafat"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Only when Israel decides to release the exact figures about the amount of weapons and military equipment seized this year in areas under Syrian control will we understand the cruel double game President al-Asad has been playing against Israel. These figures continued to grow even as Israeli and Syrian teams were holding peace talks.

The director of the secret service of an Arab country attending the Sharm al-Shaykh summit presented to me data on astronomical amounts of weapons and ammunition as well as detailed plans and instructions for perpetrating terrorist attacks. Meanwhile, in the al-Biqa' Valley, there is a thriving industry of counterfeit dollars. Printed in basements and makeshift workshops, these dollars are used to finance terror. Thousands of kilograms of dangerous drugs, such as heroin and opium, have also been found in areas under Syrian control. The profits from this business assure Syrian Army officers stationed in the area a comfortable life.

Some $6 million leave Tehran every month en route to a relay station located in a government office building in Damascus. Whenever there is a shortage or confiscation of weapons, the Iranians, with full Syrian backing, take care to replenish the stocks with submachine guns, rifles, bullets, and explosives. Thirty-one guns with mufflers were seized recently in Lebanon in an area under Syrian control.

It is no coincidence that Minister Yosi Beilin sounds quite pessimistic when he talks about the chances of peace with Damascus. Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq, too, does not hide his views. The full details of the change in Syria's policy — from walking a thin, wary, and guarded line toward peace to embracing Iranian terror — have not yet been made public, however.

Based on the testimony of my interlocutor, who substantiated his argument with documents, Syria's fingerprints can also be traced to the bombing in Tel Aviv's Dizengoff Center. To date, Israel merely accused the Syrians of "assisting" and serving as a "go-between" with Hizballah killers. Now, for the first time, the connection can be proved: The equipment used to assemble the bomb detonated in Tel Aviv came from an area in Lebanon under full Syrian control.

Al-Asad has already taken the opportunity to justify the bloody attack. He coddles the killers who set out to carry suicide attacks on behalf of the Iranians by calling them "freedom fighters struggling against the Israeli occupation."

About two weeks ago, immediately after the bombings in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, Iranian Vice President Hasan Habibi arrived in Syria and was received with royal honors. Al-Asad and Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam, as well as the Syrian prime minister and foreign minister, earnestly wooed the guest. While the Israeli delegation in Maryland was trying to squeeze a denunciation of the bombings out of the Syrians, Khaddam hastened to boast that "relations with Iran are excellent." Leaving no room for doubt, he stated that "Syria shares quite a few interests with Tehran." Jerusalem immediately understood what those interests are.

One by one, the leaders of the 12 Palestinian rejectionist organizations based in Damascus turned up at the villa put at the Iranian delegation's disposal. As is usual in Syria's centralized regime, President al-Asad was completely in on what was going on in the guest villa. Whatever the Iranian vice president did not bother to tell them, the Syrians could hear through the bugs permanently planted in the rooms and phones.

The Iranian vice president particularly insisted on meeting tete- a-tete with Islamic Jihad leader Muhammad Rahhal. Unlike Nayif Hawatimah of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and George Habash of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Rahhal got a "dressing down" for not doing enough against Israel. The Iranians divided the work load long ago: Hawatimah and Habash wage the verbal war in the media, while the Islamic Jihad does the dirty work. "The Islamic Jihad in Damascus is not an innocent office," say Israeli officials, pointing at the terror perpetrators.

The hit list of Israeli targets issued by the Islamic Jihad office in Damascus might deter tourists from visiting neighboring countries. There is good reason for posting security guards on buses carrying Israeli tourists and for their being urged to keep a low profile and not speak Hebrew loudly. Only a keen-sighted observer would notice that our neighbors are closely watching that Israeli tourists come to no harm.

Only recently, a trip by a group of Israelis to a neighboring country was canceled "due to technical reasons." The person who issued the warning mentioned a plan to carry out a spectacular attack against this specific group, which was about to leave on a trip to experience peace with an Arab country.

There is good reason for the Americans' insistence on keeping Syria on the list of terror-supporting countries and the black list of countries failing to curb the dangerous drug trade. Washington, just like Jerusalem, is troubled by the Syrian game of making peace declarations on one hand and actively backing terror on the other.

Dennis Ross, the U.S. coordinator of the talks between Israel and Syria, was only prepared to say that the Syrian absence from the "Summit of Peacemakers" was "disappointing and very regrettable." Ross read the chilling reports about Syria's two-facedness, just as the directors of secret services of the countries in the region did. These mention hundreds of terrorist attacks in the last two years that were supposed to be launched from areas under Syrian control but were foiled.

The "Summit of Peacemakers" in Sharm al-Shaykh was an excellent occasion to hear the complaints of Persian Gulf countries about the Iranian-Syrian terror machinations. Al-Asad's insistence that the circle of peace with Israel will not expand "at his expense" makes him use the kind of threatening language that speaks for itself.

A delegate from an oil emirate recounted: "We were told that if we signed a peace agreement with Israel, somebody would take care to plant suicide terrorists and bombs in our country." Who threatened them? "Search among those who did not turn up for the summit. They know exactly why they boycotted the event."

"We are like a small and dangerous paddle. If we go for peace with Israel now, they will drown us in a sea of terror," Bahraini delegates said.

Who is out to get Bahrain? Delegates point to Tehran and Damascus being behind the terror bombings currently ravaging the small oil emirate. A senior delegate strolling on the Movenpick Hotel lawn sent me to check out "the dangerous alliance of terror" that Tehran and Damascus have recently tightened.

Yasir 'Arafat is also on the joint Syrian-Iranian hit list. Anyone who got a good look at him this week saw signs of high tension. His brisk walk had slowed, and he was surrounded by a tight cordon of bodyguards. His hands shook, he looked pale and seemed to have lost at least 5 kg, and he had an impatient look in his eyes. It was hard to understand some of the sentences he mumbled.

One of his security officers, who has been with him many years, revealed the secret: If 'Arafat manages to amend the Palestinian Charter, hundreds will volunteer to carry out suicide bombings, and Israel will not be the only target.

Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] in Damascus will send detailed plans and will be willing to pay a fee at least 10 times higher so that the hit job succeeds. Israel will find itself coming to 'Arafat's rescue to save him from assassination.

Today, the Arab world is more interested in taking advantage of Israel's counterterror expertise than in making peace. When asked about peace, Algerian Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf said: "First of all, we need your assistance on terror issues. When we overcome our domestic problems, we will be able to make progress." Nevertheless, he stressed: "I have no hang-ups or prejudices about Israel."

President al-Asad's forbidding shadow hovered behind the scenes of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit. He did not come, and the Syrian media showered venomous verbal abuse on the event. Outside the Orangerie Hall, where kings, presidents, prime ministers, foreign ministers, and personal envoys of Arab state leaders were convened, Syria's name was not off the agenda even for one minute.

The Saudi foreign minister, the very impressive Sa'ud al-Faysal, had a bad surprise in store for us when he recited the official Syrian position and called for a return to the formula of the Madrid Conference. Israeli delegates sighed: Once again, Saudi Arabia had coordinated its position with the Syrians in anticipation of the meeting with the Israeli delegation.

Jordanian Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti was quite clear when he was asked to react to Syria's conspicuous absence from the summit. Not even for a minute had he deluded himself that President al-Asad would bother to turn up. "Those who chose not to come took a position that does not correspond with the policy of strategic peace they claim to have embraced," he said. It is hard to conceive of President al-Asad's attending a summit convened to declare war on terror at a time when Syria abets terror and gives shelter to killers. King Husayn chose to ignore the Syrian boycott but pointed an accusing finger at "those who commit suicide but do not die a martyr's death."

Behind the scenes of the impressive event in Sharm al-Shaykh, it transpired that Jordan has also become entangled in a serious bloody score with the Syrians. The unique peace evolving with Israel, with King Husayn's blessing and Crown Prince Hasan's encouragement, has infuriated the Syrian president. On the other hand, the rift between Husayn and al-Asad has been going on for over five years. Al-Asad no longer settles for giving the royal court the cold shoulder. It turns out that the man who insists on sending killers to Israel "in the name of Islam" is the same man who will spare no efforts or money to get rid of the king and his brother on the same occasion. Fortunately, King Husayn has so far been able to smile bitterly when he reads the classified reports about the joint Iranian-Syrian efforts to assassinate him.

Egypt, as opposed to Jordan, toyed with the idea that al-Asad would turn up at the last minute or send two or three junior officials from Damascus as a demonstration of presence. Mubarak's optimism was based on a report he received from Egyptian Ambassador to Washington Ahmad Mahir to the effect that Nawwal Ayyubi from the Syrian Embassy had attended the meeting at the State Department to prepare the Sharm al-Shaykh summit.

As the event began to take form, however, the Syrian Embassy staffer was nowhere to be seen. The moment the Syrian diplomat received unequivocal orders from Damascus to absent herself from any future sessions, President Clinton realized that there was no sense in phoning al-Asad to invite him to the conference.

Mubarak, on the other hand, phoned al-Asad a week ago to invite him. Al-Asad apparently gave a vague reply, which translated into a shrug when I tried to get a senior official to tell me exactly what al-Asad told Mubarak.

Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa would only say that "the Syrian absence is disappointing, and we regret it." Nevertheless, he added in the same breath, Egypt respects President al-Asad's decision to stay away from the conference and will take care to brief him on all the resolutions adopted.

Musa's remarks raised a few eyebrows among members of a high- level Arab delegation attending the summit. "Those who continue to woo al-Asad are shooting themselves in the foot and inviting terror. One should not display weakness in front of the Syrians. The time has come to expose al-Asad's bloody disgrace."

King Hassan of Morocco also made a last-minute attempt and phoned the Syrian president before departing for the conference, but this phone call also failed to change the Syrian decision.

Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has not yet slammed the door on President al-Asad and has not yet settled scores with him in public. In practice, the talks between the Israel and Syrian delegations have been suspended, at least until after the Israeli elections. The reason cited was Syria's refusal to denounce the bombings in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

Even U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher failed to locate the Syrian foreign minister. Christopher looked for Faruq al-Shar' on the phone for two hours and waited for him to return his call. Yet al-Shar', under orders from his master, was nowhere to be found, as if the earth had swallowed him up. Only then did Peres announce a halt to the futile talks.

"The Syrians are real bastards. They do not want to reach a peace agreement," said one of our delegates to the Maryland talks.

The way the Syrian threat machine works could be learned from private conversations with Arab delegates. "We received an unequivocal message from Damascus that, for our own good, we had better not rush to make peace with Israel," an Arab delegate who insisted on remaining anonymous told me.

"As far as we are concerned, we no longer have a problem with making peace with Israel. We know that we will reap the fruits of normal relations and cooperation. In view of the pressure from Damascus, however, we have no choice but to maintain a low profile and slow down the pace. Anyone who wants to preserve internal peace and the stability of his regime had better not anger President al-Asad," he added.

Israel: Counterterrorism Adviser on Cooperation With U.S., Others

TA1503150096 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT [LESHABAT supplement] in Hebrew 15 Mar 96 pp 10-11, 26

[Interview with Brigadier General Yig'al Pressler, prime minister's counterterrorism adviser, by Alex Fishman in Pressler's Tel-Aviv office; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Fishman] Is there real cooperation between us and other countries in the fight against terrorism?

[Pressler] There is cooperation with the United States in many areas. We have long-standing intelligence ties with the United States which matured into real cooperation in the last year. I meet with them when they come here, just as I meet with the Intelligence Branch or the Shin Bet. We really are one family. The Americans understand that terror is not solely Israel's problem. By the way, I have no doubt that each and every one of the heads of state who attended the Sharm al-Shaykh summit will return home, look inward, and draw his own conclusions, which is no mean achievement.

[Fishman] Have these intimate relations with the United States contributed something to our war against terror?

[Pressler] In every respect, starting with weapons and information exchanges through mutual study visits by special units. This does not apply only to the United States but also to several other countries. Furthermore, there are permanent forums where cooperation is discussed. For example, if we are trying to develop a certain system, meetings of experts from all sides are held every six months.

[Fishman] If our relations with the United States are so intimate, why did the explosive "Sniffers" get here only last week? It was reported that we requested them a year ago.

[Pressler] The shipment we received does not include only "Sniffers" but other explosive-detecting equipment. Ambassador Philip Wilcox, U.S. coordinator for counterterrorism, came here this week to continue the coordination on the equipment we have already received and on that which will continue to arrive from the United States. Our relationship with the United States is not one where we say "Give us this, this, and this"; rather, there are negotiations. In the wake of the bombings and Prime Minister Peres' request, President Clinton decided to speed up the delivery of the equipment.

[Fishman] The CIA director is staying over in Israel after Clinton's visit. What do we want from him?

[Pressler] I will not go into that. I will only tell you that on the issue of counterterrorism, we are no less experienced than the Americans. They also learn from us. We should not give the impression that in this relationship, we stand hat in hand, begging for assistance.

[Fishman] In addition to the United States, are there any other countries conducting such an intimate dialogue with us on the issue of counterterrorism?

[Pressler] Certainly. Only this week I had a meeting with a representative from a West European country.

[Fishman] Does the list include countries that have good relations with Iran, such as France and Germany?

[Pressler] I do not want to elaborate, but there are countries, particularly in Western Europe, with which there is cooperation and which fit your description in terms of their relations with Iran.

[Fishman] What about counterterror cooperation with Egypt and Jordan?

[Pressler] I would like to remind you that about a year ago, there was a very successful parley between the Egyptian and Israeli police forces, with the participation of the defense minister and Public Security Minister Moshe Shahal. There is cooperation in various spheres. We have good relations with the Jordanians, who work very well. [passage omitted]

Israel: Hamas Activists Arrested in E. Jerusalem, W. Bank Areas

TA1803080596 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0500 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] activists in East Jerusalem, who are Israeli citizens and are suspected of having assisted the terrorist gang that staged the recent bombings in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Ashqelon, have been arrested in recent weeks. The defense establishment has recently been working very hard to expose the Hamas infrastructure in East Jerusalem. Our police affairs correspondent Ya'el Sternhal reports:

[Begin Sternhal recording] As soon as the second bus bombing occurred in Jerusalem, the fingerprints of accomplices in East Jerusalem were immediately evident to many Israel Police and Shin Bet officers, who said already then that the two bus bombings could not have been staged without help from inside Jerusalem.

Several Israeli Arabs living in East Jerusalem and the surrounding villages have been arrested in the past two weeks within the framework of the investigation conducted by the security forces. According to data in their possession, the arrested suspects are not members of suicide gangs but accomplices who provided shelter and transportation to the bombers and hid the explosives they used.

Last week, the security forces searched a village near the capital and found technical equipment believed to have been used to prepare the bombs, which, as may be recalled, were made up of two attached mines and covered with nails and metal balls. The security forces have so far arrested only a handful of suspects, but the assessment is that there is a vast infrastructure of a few thousand Hamas men living and operating in several main locations in East Jerusalem. [end recording]

Arrests continued overnight in other areas. Nine suspected Hamas activists were arrested in Hebron and Ramallah, and another 20 were arrested for disseminating seditious material. Our correspondent Uri Gordon reports:

[Begin Gordon recording] The security forces conducted an operation last night to arrest Hamas activists. Six suspects were caught in the villages of Khirbat al-Burj, Dura, and Bayt Awla in the Hebron area. [passage omitted]

Arrests continued in the Ramallah District as well. Three suspected Hamas activists were apprehended in Mazra'ah al-Sharqiyah. A large quantity of seditious material was found in the searches conducted in the district, and 20 Palestinians were taken in for questioning. [end recording]

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0700 GMT on 18 March adds that "the Palestinian security services arrested 10 Hamas leaders in Tulkarm at dawn today. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that these include Shaykh Bilal Safira, director of the local waqf, as well as members of the town's charity committee."]

Israel: Palestinians Said To Use Hamas Funds in Stock Market

TA1603115796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At the Sharm al-Shaykh conference, it transpired that Iran sends $6-10 million to the territories annually and that some of that money reaches Israeli organizations. Our correspondent Yo'el Nir has learned that Palestinian individuals who received money from Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] set up an association with Israeli Arabs which was registered legally and even traded on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange [TASE]. It later delivered the proceeds to families of suicide terrorists in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza.

Israel: Satellite Photo Dispute To Be Discussed With U.S.

TA1703095696 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 17 Mar 96 p A4

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel and the United States will this week discuss new regulations for the commercial uses of spy satellites and satellite photos. Israel wants the United States to avoid selling high resolution photos to Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, and in exchange has agreed to impose similar restrictions on the commercial uses of the Israeli Ofeq satellite.

The two countries want to fix the maximal resolution for satellite photos which commercial companies will be permitted to supply to third countries. The Americans will try to convince Israel that today it is possible to easily obtain quite good satellite photos on the international market, and consequently it makes no sense to impose serious restrictions on U.S. exports in particular.

On Wednesday, 20 March, the joint satellites committee — headed on the Israeli side by Yequti'el Mor, director of the Defense Ministry Foreign Affairs Division, and on the American side by Martha Harris, assistant secretary of state for export supervision — will convene in Washington. This committee will convene in the wake of the understandings reached in a meeting between Defense Ministry Director General David 'Ivri and CIA head John Deutch in London about two months ago.

Israel Aircraft Industries [IAI] recently announced a partnership with the U.S. company Core Software Technologies toward the development and launching of a commercial photo satellite to be based on the Ofeq-3 military satellite, which was put into orbit in April 1995. The IAI statement states that "the IAI will fulfill all regulations pertaining to other commercial photo satellites" as far as the marketing of the photos is concerned.

Israel: Kahana Hay Member Detained for Threatened Bomb Attack

TA1803103196 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 18 Mar 96 p A4

[Report by Yosi Hatuni]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kahana Hay activist Barukh Zohari, 36, from Giv'atayim, was detained yesterday after he called the police last weekend and announced that the "Jewish Hamas" plans to place a car bomb in Tel Aviv. Judge Yehudit Amsterdam of the Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court extended Zohari's remand by two days. [passage omitted]

Israel: U.S. Citizen Said Spying for Israel Detained in Iran

TA1703111596 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 17 Mar 96 p 9

[Report by correspondent in Bonn Gad Shimron]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] At the request of American Jewish elements, Germany is acting in Iran for the release of a young American Jew of Iranian origin who has been detained in Tehran on suspicion of spying for Israel.

Two weeks ago Anti-Defamation League representatives approached the German Embassy in Washington with a request that Bonn use its tight connections with Iran to find out what happened to the detained Jew.

Since the ayatollahs came to power in Iran 18 years ago several Iranian Jews have been executed under the pretext of spying for Israel. [passage omitted]

Jordan: Prime Minister Briefs Cabinet on Peacemakers Summit

JN1603210096 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 2000 GMT 16 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report over video from the "News at Ten" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti briefed the cabinet today on results of the king's recent talks with the U.S. Administration in Washington and on Sharm al-Shaykh Summit of Peacemakers. Information Minister Marwan al-Mu'ashshir said after the cabinet meeting this evening that the summit's final communique was a balanced one, expressing support for the peace process and resumption of peace negotiations.

Dr. al-Mu'ashshir stressed again that the Islamic group Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] has no offices or presence in Jordan. He said Jordan would never accept the presence of armed groups on its territory.

Minister al-Mu'ashshir said Prime Minister al-Kabariti had an in-depth discussion in Cairo with the Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' on the Sharm al-Shaykh conference. He said al-Shar' said his country opposed the conference because of its timing and felt that it was hastily arranged in a way that could make its resolutions biased towards a certain party. Al-Mu'ashshir said the prime minister emphasized to Mr. al-Shar' that the Arab group at the summit had put forward the same ideas that Syria would have presented at the conference.

Jordan: Prime Minister Calls Peacemakers Summit 'Balanced'

JN1703175896 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The House of Representatives met in a session today under Speaker Sa'd Hayil al-Surur. Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti and his cabinet attended.

Reacting to statements made at the session on the Summit of Peacemakers which was held in Sharm al-Shaykh, Egypt, Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti said the Jordanian Government's position is clear. He said the government believes there is no such thing as legitimate or illegitimate terrorism. He said: Terrorism, with all its forms and regardless of its origins and pretexts, is denounced.

The prime minister said the results of the Summit of Peacemakers were balanced and the summit aimed to strengthen and protect the peace process and fight terrorism.

The prime minister also said the government is prepared to meet with the House Foreign Affairs Committee on Tuesday [19 March] to discuss the government's foreign policy.

The prime minister stressed that the government will present a report to the House on Tuesday [26 March] on the policy on appointment to the government posts.

House Speaker Sa'd Hayil al-Surur said a number of deputies requested a special session to discuss the government's foreign policy. A number of deputies also requested a discussion on the policy on appointments to government posts

The House of Representatives is continuing its session to discuss business on its agenda.

Jordan: Opposition Parties Issue Statement on Peacemakers' Summit

JN1703115296 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 17 Mar 96 p 13

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman—The Jordanian opposition parties called on the Jordanian and Arab masses to unify their ranks to defend their just rights, champion the continuation of the Palestinian resistance, and annul all the agreements that serve the Israeli policy.

In a statement on the Sharm al-Shaykh conference, a copy of which was sent to AL-DUSTUR by fax, these parties called for facing the challenge this conference poses by resisting all security and military cooperation with the United States and the enemy and supporting the Palestinian people in pursuing their just struggle until their rights are restored and occupation is terminated.

The statement asserts the need to resist any interference in the affairs of Iraq or any other Arab state and to lay down the basis of relations based on real cooperation among all the Arab states, thus reinforcing unity and facilitating steady relations among these states

The statement was signed by the Jordanian Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, the Constitutional Jordanian Arab Front Party, the Progressive Arab Ba'th Party, the Jordanian People's Democratic Party-Hashd, the Islamic Action Front, the Jordanian Communist Party, the Pan-Arab Action Front Party, and the Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party.

Jordan: Editorial Views Tasks of Peace Summit's Working Group

JN1603091596 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 16 Mar 96 p 6

[Editorial: "Step After Final Act"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The recent statement by Egyptian President Husni Mubarak in which he said that the

Sharm al-Shaykh summit had adopted secret resolutions that were not totally reflected in the final declaration is well worth noting.

But this disclosure, which came in comments Mr. Mubarak made to Egyptian newspapers published Thursday [14 March], should not surprise anyone because the public statements that were delivered during the deliberations of the summit aimed first and foremost to send some political messages across the Middle East and take some public shots at parties that are perceived to support acts of terror in the region.

Likewise, the international community and the concerned parties cannot judge the Sharm al-Shaykh meeting by its final act alone. Since the peace-saving summit had also some effective police actions against terrorism in mind, it is only natural that such measures would not be made public but rather left for the working group envisaged by the participants to iron out and agree upon. It is no accident that this working group will convene in Washington in about 10 days to put into effect a bilateral, regional, and international plan of action against terrorism. That would produce an effective mechanism to pin down terrorist groups and eliminate their activities in order to promote the cause of peace and help the people who believe in it. But the results of these efforts will even be more effective if they are matched by similar action to simultaneously protect the peace process through addressing political frustration, economic imbalances, and deprivations which render parts of the region a fertile ground for violence and instability. Such a parallel effort will also be in harmony with the final declaration of the peace-makers summit which pledges "to support the Israeli-Palestinian agreement, the continuation of the negotiating process, and politically and economically to reinforce it."

Strictly speaking, the working group has a broad mandate to perform. Operative paragraph (F) of the declaration empowers this group "to prepare recommendations on how best to implement the decisions contained in the statement (Declaration)." Its recommendation should include the political, economic, as well as security measures needed to salvage the peace effort. This, after all, was the intent of the peace-savers who assembled in Egypt to breathe new life in the peace process, and to demonstrate this support for regional parties committed to it so as to help create a Middle East free of tension, injustice, and terror.

Jordan: Columnist Calls Summit 'Excellent' at Facing Terrorism

JN1603140096 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 16 Mar 96 p 6

["Jordanian Perspective" Column by Dr. Musa al-Kilani]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The international summit held in Sharm al-Shaykh in the wake of threats to the Middle East peace process posed by militant violence did an excellent job of addressing the scourge of terrorism and sought to protect the quest for peace in the region after decades of bloodshed and violence.

The most effective outcome of the gathering of 30 world leaders, most of them from the Middle East itself, was the move it launched toward formulating a realistic mechanism to fight terrorism. This, as we understand, will involve close cooperation at state level and assistance to countries like Jordan which have suffered immensely from terrorism and fought terrorists with everything in their power.

In sum, the summit was perhaps the most important event in the Middle East peace process at this stage, since it was clear that extremism is an element that every party involved in the peace process had to confront at every stage of Arab-Israeli peace making.

We were heartened to hear the world leaders reaffirm their understanding that Islam and extremism were alien to each other and we hope acts will show these were not empty words to satisfy the world.

Beyond the Middle East peace process and extremism, the Summit of Peacemakers also had a distinct political angle aimed at serving the interests of Bill Clinton and Shim'on Peres in their bids for reelection as U.S. president and Israeli prime minister respectively.

As far as Mr. Clinton was concerned, opinion polls indicating a surge in popularity for his Republican challenger Robert Dole, coupled with negative media reporting in the Watergate scandal [as published] and internal economic problems, a high-profile international exposure was an absolute necessity to shore up his status in the run-up to elections in November. What many see as an anti-Clinton campaign by the British Conservative Party—which obviously resents the U.S. president's involvement in finding a solution to the conflict in Northern Ireland—was another key element that urgently narrated a high-level political exposure for Mr. Clinton and what he stands for.

The fact that Israel was the focal point in the scenario drawn up by American strategists gave Mr. Clinton's appearance at Sharm al-Shaykh an Additional dimension in terms of sending a strong message to the powerful pro-Israeli constituents in the U.S. that Mr. Clinton was committed to the so-called strategic alliance with the Jewish state and was willing to do whatever it took to support Israel and Israelis.

One has to review the actions that Mr. Clinton undertook since early March, beginning with the strongest condemnation yet of terrorism in the Middle East and reiteration of America's stand behind Israel and the overnight dispatch of hi-tech bomb-detecting equipment and assistance to Israel and culminating in an emphatic visit to Israel after the conclusion of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit.

For the American people, who, for the first time, saw extremism coming to their shores as they did in the bombings of the World Trade Center and the Federal Building in Oklahoma, as well as an act of sabotage against an Amtrak train, the fight against terrorism has assumed a high priority. As such, Mr. Clinton's direct involvement, as brought to them through the television screens of America, is a reassuring element, which will definitely be used to its full advantage in the Clinton reelection campaign.

As far as Mr. Peres was concerned, the dipping line in his graph of popularity, as indicated by opinion polls, coupled with the emergence of a strong rightist alliance, made it imperative that he be also given an opportunity, and an effective and strong one at that, to regain the lead in the run-up to May elections. The timing was also perfect as the Sharm al-Shaykh summit was held only three days after rightist leaders Binyamin Netanyahu, David Levi, and Rafa'el Eytan sealed a strong electoral alliance that showed every sign of posing the most serious challenge to Mr. Peres' reelection prospects.

For the security-conscious people of Israel, the vivid image of world leaders gathered along with Mr. Peres to promise support for Israel and declare war against terrorism was indeed reassuring. Shored up in the bargain were Mr. Peres' sagging political fortunes ahead of the elections.

Survery results published by two major Israeli dailies Friday, two days after the summit and one day after Mr. Clinton made an unequivocal pledge of support for the Jewish state in the presence of Mr. Peres, showed the prime minister jumping three points ahead of Mr. Netanhayu. That represented a six-point gain for Mr. Peres in two weeks.

The question that comes up is: Do we, in Jordan, have to concern ourselves with the politics of Israeli and American elections?

In the context of Israel, our interests warrant that we look closely at the political game to a certain extent, in that it is clear that a right-wing victory in Israel in the 29 May elections would deal a serious blow to Palestinian aspirations for statehood and to prospects for a just and fair settlement in the Syrian-Israeli track of negotiations. Both events do have a direct bearing on Jordanians' hopes to see a just, durable, and comprehensive peace prevailing in the Middle East region.

As far as the American elections are concerned, it has been established without any doubt that President Clinton is a friend of Jordan. This was further cemented by the fact that President Clinton invited His Majesty King Husayn to fly with him to Sharm al-Shaykh, meaning an opportunity for both leaders to hold leisurely talks for several hours aboard Air Force One.

Furthermore, it is now known that it was at Mr. Clinton's initiative that His Majesty was chosen as the main speaker at the closed session of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, where the Monarch eloquently outlined Jordan's sufferings from terrorism and the Kingdom's experience with dealing with terrorism. The King also explained to the world leaders how the alert security forces of Jordan managed to gain the upper hand against extremists and continue to be on the vigil.

At the same time, beyond the personal friendship that President Clinton and His Majesty appear to have built, it is also clear that Washington and the world at large have come to terms with accepting Jordan's key role in the Middle East. And that acceptance is sure to be part of any American strategy in the region, regardless of whether it is Mr. Clinton or Mr. Dole who wins in the November elections.

Jordan: Summit Said 'Disappointment' to Israel for Lack of Sympathy

JN1603121896 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 16 Mar 96 p 2

[Editorial by G. H. Jansen]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The so-called "Summit of Peacemakers" should, more accurately and more honestly, have been called, the "summit of schmaltz," (Schmaltz being a Yiddish word popularised by Hollywood, meaning self-conscious sentimentalism).

Because of the 29 (or 31 participants) only three or four have actually made peace with Israel while at least two are making war at home, Russia in Chechenya and Turkey in Kurdistan (in addition to occupying cyprus). [as published]

It was the U.S. and American media-men who tried to foist the schmaltzy title on the meeting so as to get a sympathy vote for its ally, Israel, after the suicide bombings. But this did not work because the only participants who expressed sympathy for Israel were Europeans—France, Germany, Norway, Spain—but there was no expression of sympathy from the others and certainly not Arab participants.

Indeed, Sharm al-Shaykh was a disappointment to Israel because it wanted the meeting to concentrate on denouncing "terror" ("smashing the snake of terrorism" according to Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres in an unusual descent into overt propaganda rather than on revitalising the ailing "peace process." But, in the event, the two themes were evenly balanced.

Israel also wanted an onslaught on Iran, ("Tehran is the world capital of terrorism," according to another piece of Peres propaganda), but Iran was almost totally ignored, even in the final communique.

Instead of extending sympathy, Arab representatives made several references to Israel's use of "collective punishment" and the punitive blockade of Palestinian self-rule areas (in which they were, most notably, supported by the prime minister of Ireland, John Bruton).

The objective of U.S. "schmaltz" at Sharm al-Shaykh was to give the impression that the Arabs were now, in political terms, "standing shoulder-to-shoulder" with Israel—a favourite American choice of words—when in fact the only shoulder-to-shoulder stance was in the traditional group photograph at the end of the meeting.

The Arabs demonstrated their independent nonshoulder-to-shoulder stance several times. For instance, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal referred to the Hebron mosque massacre by an Israeli extremist settler and he harked back to the principle of "land for peace" as the basis of the peace process, none of this very pleasing to Israel which seeks peace without giving up the land.

King Husayn was very practical when he stressed, more than once, the need to define "terrorism"—which no one even attempted because formulating a definition would have blown up the conference since Israel's "terrorists" are, usually though not always, an Arab's "Freedom fighter."

The participants clearly could not—perhaps for lack of time—and did not work out any practical suggestions on how to deal with "terrorism" and even Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat could do no more than propose a "permanent international body to pursue peace" along with bellicose threats to uproot Hamas and Islamic Jihad through "unified will" with Israel; hardly an appropriate sentiment for a Summit of Peacemakers.

Turkish President Sulayman Demirel demonstrated a practical side when he proposed economic sanctions against states aiding "terrorism"—whatever that might mean—and the extradition of "terrorists," and even an intelligence centre to coordinate intelligence on "terrorist" activities. (He took some trouble to make thoughtful proposals in spite of the fact that a speech he made to the plenary of the Israel parliament had to be shifted to a small committee room—for lack of an audience.)

It was an odd, but probably useful development that two very different leaders—Rusian President Boris Yeltsin and Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal of Saudi Arabia—both suggested a second Madrid-type conference to revive the Arab-Israeli peace process—a proposal made early by the absent Syrians.

(Equally odd but much less useful was an incongruous reference by Mr. Yeltsin to the fact that the Ten Commandments had been handed down to Moses in the vicinity of Sharm al-Shaykh.)

Whether or not the Sharm al-Shaykh meeting was of any use will only be decided by the decisions taken by a working group of the conference which is to meet in 10 days time. Much will depend on the group's composition. If it is run by the U.S. and Israel, one can expect it to recommend a cut-off of finances and arms to "terrorists" and even the application of economic sanctions as suggested by Turkey (which has its own Kurdish "terrorist" problem).

All that Israel failed to achieve at Sharm al-Shaykh was righted by Washington during U.S. President Bill Clinton's visits to Tel Aviv and jerusalem after the summit when he poured buckets of schmaltz onto the U.S.-Israel relationship. One manifestation was for Mr. Clinton to attend a meeting of Israel's inner cabinet, the first foreign leader to do so. Under a new bilateral agreement he promised Israel a donation of $100 million for its anti-terrorism campaign.

Such open favouritism ensures the powerful support of the American Zionism lobby for Mr. Clinton's presidential bid and could ensure his victory, just as the link with Mr. Clinton may do for Mr. Peres in May in his prime ministerial race.

But this close identification could pose a danger to U.S.-Israel relations and to the U.S. Jewish community. For there is a very strong current of anti-Semitism in the U.S. electorate to which the populist leader Pat Buchanan has appealed. Such people do not see how America's national interest is served by giving Israel everything it asks for. Mr. Clinton's open and excessive pro-zionist preferences could yet lead to an anti-Israel backlash which could be very nasty indeed.

And, surprisingly, anti-American sentiment is beginning to emerge among self-respecting Israelis who believe unconditional U.S. aid and support discourage Israel from making concessions necessary to achieve peace. Indeed, some Israeli envoys have even gone to the U.S. and urged Americans not to support Israel in such a way as to damage its long-term national interests.

Jordan: Paper Criticizes Israeli 'Right Wing' 'War Mentality'

JN1703133196 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 17 Mar 96 p 21

[Editorial: "Mentalities of War, Peace"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli right wing insists that the international unanimous decision to make and build peace in the region, as recently expressed by the peacemakers in the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, is no more than a regional and international cover to justify imposing a siege on the Palestinians, starving them, and humiliating them, and to legitimize the Israeli war against the Lebanese citizens, as stated by the coordinator of the Israeli army operations in Lebanon yesterday. This means that the Israelis did not fully grasp the message conveyed by the peacemakers' summit.

The Israeli right wing also insists on viewing the intensive U.S. presence, led by U.S. President Bill Clinton, at the Israeli inner cabinet session and on the Israeli demographic map in the wake of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, as interference in Israeli internal affairs, particularly the upcoming Israeli elections. This also means that the Israeli right wing is colorblind, that it has not yet understood the conditions and requirements of the new phase of international and regional changes.

Furthermore, the Israeli right wing insists on giving a deaf ear to the recommendations made by the Arab foreign ministers who called on Israel to cancel its current occupation measures, which bog down the Palestinian-Israeli peace track, and to return to negotiation on other tracks. The Israeli right also believes that the wide Arab participation in the peacemakers' summit is nothing but an expression of support for Israel's intransigent practices which violate the international peace decision. This means that Israel does not take the Arab sincere desire to make peace seriously enough.

Therefore, it is obvious that there are two conflicting mentalities in the region; the mentality of peace and the mentality of war. It is not as Israel claims that the confrontation is between Israel, a peacemaker, and Hamas [Islamic Resistance] Movement, an enemy of peace. Israel is directing the peace process in the mentality of the Israeli right-wing generals, which matches the mentality of Palestinian extremists, as Mr. Yasir 'Arafat pointed out on the basis of certain evidence in his possession.

In brief, world leaders in the Summit of Pacemakers agreed to support the people's peace process, a most prominent part of which is the Palestinian-Israeli agreements. This requires that the message be well understood by all, particularly Israel which occupies Arab lands, through an open-minded peace mentality that looks to the future rather than a narrow-minded war mentality that looks back to the past with its bitter tragedies.

Jordan: Prince Hasan Reiterates Amman's 'Firm Stand' Against Terrorism

JN1803135996 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1200 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan, the regent, has received the head and members of American War Veterans.

His royal highness reviewed with the delegation exerted efforts to enhance the Middle East peace process and Jordan's firm stand against terrorism.

Talks also tackled bilateral relations and means of cooperation between retired military officers from both countries.

Jordan: Allenby Bridge To Reopen for West Bank Travelers 16 Mar

JN1503210296 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sources from the Public Security Department said that the King Husayn [Allenby] Bridge will be reopened tomorrow, 16 March, to people travelling to all West Bank areas from 0700 until 1400 [0500-1200 GMT]. Gaza Strip residents will be excepted.

Jordan: Interior Ministry To Facilitate Return of Iraqi Refugees

JN1603131896 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 16 Mar 96 p 3

[Report by Ahmad Kurayshan: "Special to the JORDAN TIMES"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—The Ministry of Interior and the concerned police departments in the various governorates today (Saturday) will begin implementing new measures concerning Iraqi nationals residing in Jordan estimated at approximately 150,000.

Minister of Interior 'Awad Khulayfat announced that Iraqis wishing to return to their country be accommodated and that those who have resided in Jordan beyond their six-month permits be exempt from paying any fines if they plan on returning home and do so within the next month. The penalty for residing in Jordan with an expired permit is usually JD 1 per each day beyond the allotted permit period.

Dr. Khulayfat stressed, however, that the ministry was only authorised to cancel up to JD 500 fines, adding that larger amounts require the approval of the Council of Ministers.

He also announced that the ministry and the police departments will take into special consideration cases of a humanitarian nature and will study each case on its own merits. He said the total amount of fines due to be paid by Iraqis for expired residency permits was estimated at JD 37 million.

Ministry sources said on Thursday [14 March] that Iraqis wishing to return home should submit a formal request to the ministry through the Aliens and Residency Department at the Public Security Department along with a photocopy of their passports.

According to these sources, the ministry has already received hundreds of requests by Iraqi nationals requesting exemption from the fines.

Thousands of Iraqis crossed into Jordan since the 1991 Gulf war and although many had returned since, thousands of others continued to reside in the Kingdom.

A large number of them have been attempting to emigrate to America, Australia, and European countries but few have been successful.

Jordan: Minister—Decision on Iraqis 'Humanitarian' Not 'Political'

MM1503143296 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 15 Mar 96 p 4

[Report by Mazin Hijazi and 'Imad al-Furayh in Amman: "Jordanian Interior Minister Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: We Will Not Expel Any Iraqi and We Will Help Those Who Want To Return"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jordanian Interior Minister Dr. 'Awad Khulayfat has said that the Jordanian authorities will not expel any Iraqis and will help those who want to return. This came in statements to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT following the ministry's decision yesterday to exempt those Iraqis wishing to return to their country from the money fines that they have incurred. Apparently, some 70,000 Iraqi illegal residents are affected by the decision.

Dr. Khulayfat said that the Jordanian authorities did not and will not force any Iraqi to leave Jordan, and neither will they expel Iraqis or Arabs who have not broken Jordanian laws on Jordan's sovereignty and general security.

He added that the Jordanian authorities will not throw anyone into the outer darkness or prosecute any Iraqi living in Jordan.

The Jordanian Interior Ministry issued a statement yesterday announcing that Minister Khulayfat has instructed all competent ministry departments to give all the help needed and take into consideration the personal circumstances of those Iraqi citizens wishing to return to their country, by exempting them from the fines that they have incurred for breaking the residency and immigration law. The interior minister has set the validity of the exemption period at one month.

In his statements to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT the interior minister said that "this decision has no political implications. Instead, it is a humanitarian decision aimed at helping those Iraqis who have overstayed beyond the legal six-month period, and only those who wish to return to Iraq." No Iraqi will be exempted unless he makes a hand-written application requesting the exemption, for the purpose of leaving.

The minister stressed that this decision should not be misinterpreted as an expulsion or deportation of any Iraqi, and reaffirmed that Jordan will remain a home for all Iraqis and Arabs, and that this is part of Jordan's mission of which we are proud.

He added that any Iraqi wishing to officially leave Jordan for anywhere else will be exempted from paying the fines.

With regard to those Iraqis who do not want to return, those who are opposed to the Iraqi regime, or those wanted by the Baghdad regime because of their political views, Dr. 'Awad Khulayfat said that Jordan is their second home, and that they are in their country here and that, for the duration of their stay in Jordan, they will not be questioned or prosecuted by the Jordanian authorities.

Jordan: Ekeus on Expected Visit, Iraq Sanctions

JN1703122796 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 17 Mar 96 p 1, 16

[Report by 'Abdallah al-Qaq]

[FBIS Translated Text] London—Rolf Ekeus, head of the international commission charged with the removal of the [Iraqi] weapons of mass destruction, praised His Majesty King Husayn's wisdom, dexterity, and efficient, active dealing with the current events and the Iraqi issue. He said that His Majesty King Husayn is a wise, great politician and an efficient and experienced statesman who deals with various issues with great interest. In a statement to AL-DUSTUR, Ekeus added that he recently held several contacts with King Husayn on various political developments, especially regarding the Iraqi question. He said that he sensed from His Majesty King Husayn a serious desire to cooperate with the international community, and that he is concerned about the unity of the Iraqi people and lifting their suffering. He said that the recent discovery of new quantities of weapons at the Amman International Airport shows the extent of Jordan's interest in continued cooperation with the United Nations to halt arms shipments to Iraq. He said that the Special Commission is investigating this issue both with the concerned international quarters and Jordanian officials, who offered information about this subject. He said: We sent our appreciation and thanks to the Jordanian Government for this cooperation and major contribution to the discovery of these materials, which were hidden for delivery to Baghdad and for use in the production of banned weapons.

On his expected visit to Jordan, Ekeus said: I will visit Amman within the next few days for consultation with officials on a number of current issues. We consider Jordan an extremely cooperative country with the United Nations and the international commission for the removal of Iraq's weapons. Jordan has extended to us the information we requested from it within the framework of our contacts with Arab and friendly states.

On lifting the Iraq sanctions, Ekeus said: We believe that unless Iraq pledges to hand over all the required information about their germ, biological, and nuclear weapons, it will be difficult to lift their suffering. Ekeus asked: Are we or the Iraqi regime itself to blame for the Iraqi people's suffering? We are demanding compliance with all the required obligations and the release of Kuwaiti prisoners held in Iraqi prisons, about whom no decision has been made. I believe that UN Security Council Resolution No. 686 is quite clear. It demands the release of all Kuwaiti and other prisoners held in Iraqi jails during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

He added: Iraq must implement this resolution before the sanctions can be lifted, not to mention its obligations under all UN Security Council resolutions.

Ekeus told AL-DUSTUR in London during the International Conference on Human rights and the Kuwaiti POW's and MIA's that "Unless Iraq pledges to release the POW's and complies with UN resolutions in giving additional information on the biological weapons which it still possesses, I believe lifting the international sanctions on Iraq will be a remote possibility." Ekeus said that the oil-for-food resolution was adopted for humanitarian reasons and that the United Nations will monitor the implementation of this resolution after a formula has been reached guaranteeing that the oil revenues will be distributed on all those who deserve them.

In his statement, Ekeus asked: "In whose interest was Iraq developing these sophisticated weapons? We learned through investigation that Iraq was preparing missiles not just with a 70- or 100-km range. Indeed, our estimates indicate that Iraq was preparing missiles with a 2,000-km range. These missiles could reach London, Paris, Moscow, as well as my country, Sweden.

Ekeus said that monitoring of sophisticated weapons will continue for a long time irrespective of whether or not the international sanctions are lifted until we make sure that Iraq is not planning to build a new sophisticated missile network. Ekeus said that the latest Iraqi measures to impede U.S. efforts in Iraq will not divert us from our work and we will continue our efforts.

Ekeus revealed to AL-DUSTUR that progress has been realized in his commission's work. He said: So far we have a complete picture on the network that exports weapons to Iraq although Iraq is keeping some information from us. We established contacts with governments to which the exporting companies are associated and we identified some brokers. We have not despaired despite our long and tedious mission.

Ekeus said that his commission needs financial support from the United Nations because the members of the commission are carrying out intensive and effective efforts to carry out this sensitive mission which is being watched carefully by the whole world.

On the International Conference on Human rights and the Kuwaiti POW's and MIA's in London, Ekeus said: We join Kuwait in demanding the release of the prisoners in Iraqi jails and we thank and appreciate the invitation we received from Shaykh Salim al-Sabah, chairman of the national committee for POW's and MIA's, to attend this conference which is being held in London in the presence of former President George Bush and former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and other prominent world figures.

Concluding his statement, Ekeus said that he will tour Arab countries, including Jordan, to learn about various developments and to inform officials on the commission's work and activities, adding that Jordan is cooperating with the United Nation and "we appreciate this cooperation."

Jordan: Shubaylat Sentenced to 3 Years for Slandering King

JN1803091296 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 18 Mar 96 pp 1, 7

[Report by Sa'idah Kilani; "Special to the JORDAN TIMES"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—Layth Shubaylat president of the Jordan Engineers Association (JEA), was sentenced on Sunday [17 March] to three years in prison for slandering their Majesties King Husayn and Queen Nur and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan.

The defence team said immediately after the ruling was issued by the State Security Court that they will appeal the verdict at the Court of Cassation.

Security forces maintained a strong presence in and around the court. Mr. Shubaylat's wife, Rima, vowed to stand by her husband and distributed brochures to a small group of supporters gathered outside the court. Mr. Shubaylat, 52, has ten children.

Mr. Shubaylat, arrested on 9 December, was held without bail after he delivered a series of speeches in different parts of the Kingdom. The military court, presided by civil Judge Muhammad al-Shar', found Mr. Shubaylat's lectures had forthrightly criticised the Hashemite family, accusing its members of treachery.

In his lectures, Mr. Shubaylat, a known opponent of the Arab-Israeli peace process, was quoted by the prosecution as saying that "his Majesty the King and the government had worked on Zionising Jordan," that the Hashemite family "trusts the Jews and does not trust the Arab regimes" and that "Jordan had become a farm for the ruling family."

Mr. Shubaylat was convicted on two charges—slandering their majesties the King and Queen and Crown Prince Hasan and distributing statements that are harmful to the King.

Sources say that two other charges, deemed to undermine the Kingdom's currency and stir troubles, might be filed against Mr. Shubaylat later on. But this information could not be confirmed on Sunday.

Two Egyptian lawyers arrived last week to join the defence team that included more than 150 lawyers. They said they will stay in the Kingdom until a final ruling is issued in the case.

Mr. Shubaylat, who won while in detention a second term as JEA president last month, has also expressed his intention to run for the parliamentary byelections for a vacant Balqa seat. The elections will be held on 15 April.

Reactions differ on his chances in the byelections. But in legal terms, Mr. Shubaylat will have the right to elections if a final ruling is not issued in his case by the time the polls are held, according to a prominent lawyer.

According to the lawyer, the ruling of the State Security Court could not be considered last final if the convict appealed at the Court of Cassation within 30 days.

Analysts believe that since the elections will be held on 15 April and Mr. Shubaylat has a one-month period to appeal, then he has chance to contest the elections before the Court of Cassation issues a ruling.

If Mr. Shubaylat won the elections before the Court of Cassation rules in his case, then he will be released since he will be entitled to immunity as a member of the Lower House of Parliament, the lawyer said.

But some analysts believe that Mr. Shubaylat's case could not be considered as political and, in accordance with the law, he does not have the right to run in parliamentary elections.

The Election Law stipulates that any candidate nominating himself-herself for a parliament seat should not, among other conditions, be convicted "for more than one year for a non-political crime and has not been pardoned." [as published]

There was no consensus among three lawyers interviewed by the JORDAN TIMES on a clear definition of what is or is not a "political crime."

One lawyer said that a political case is any case that is instigated by a political motive. Another lawyer said that Mr. Shubaylat's case was controversial and could not be decided without thorough study whether it is political.

But it will not become clear until the concerned authorities, the minister of interior or the governor, decide to reject or accept Mr. Shubaylat's nomination during the registration period (March 21-23). In case Mr. Shubaylat's nomination is rejected his lawyer Jawad Yunis said he will contest the decision at the Higher Court of Justice.

Mr. Shubaylat was sentenced to 20 years in prison in 1992 for sedition but was released following a Royal pardon the same month.

Jordan: Court Sentences 3 Islamic Group Members, Acquits Others

JN1603175696 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1700 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The State Security Court has convicted three members of al-Tajdid al-Islamic Movement — the Islamic Revivalist — for illegal possession of explosives and sentenced them to seven-and-a-half years in prison. The others were acquitted for lack of evidence.

The prosecution said the convicted men possessed the explosives and other weapons without license to use them illegally contrary to the Explosives Law of 1953. [sentence as heard] The verdict was passed by three judges in the court headed by Colonel Hafiz Amin.

Colonel Amin told reporters after the proceedings that if the convicted individuals handed the explosives to the authorities, there would have been no case against them.

Jordan: Central Bank Governor Discusses Debts, Trade With Iraq

JN1703174196 Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic 17 Mar 96 p 9

[Report by Nabil al-Ghayshan]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Dr. Ziyad Fariz, governor of the Central Bank of Jordan [CBJ], has disclosed the true figure of Jordan's debts as of the end of 1995.

During his meeting yesterday with the chairman and members of the House of Representatives Financial Committee, Dr. Fariz said that the general foreign debt amounts to $4,465 million, including military debts and loans, with the treasury as guarantor; that the general internal debt amounts to $966.1 million; and that private sector loans, including the local banks, amount to $3,705 million.

Dr. Fariz said that the fault lies in misusing the borrowed money rather than increasing it. If it is used, he said, for production purposes, it will benefit the economy, but it is wrong to use it to support foodstuffs and fodder.

Dr. Fariz assured the Financial Committee that the main purpose of raising the interest rates on the dinar was to enhance the currency stability and punish those who borrow in the dinar and deposit in the dollar to speculate on the national currency.

He also said: We raised the interest rates, knowing it will affect investment. But, currency stability will also encourage investment.

The CBJ governor estimated Jordanian Banks' dollar deposits at $3,200 million, while he asserted that Jordanian dollar deposits abroad amount to $6 billion, according to the World Bank. [passage omitted]

Dr. Fariz said that the volume of the trade protocol with Iraq was not reduced for political reasons, adding that had it not been for political reasons, the reduction would have exceeded 50 percent, because we cannot continue to export goods to Iraq without receiving oil in exchange [li'annana la yumkin an nastamirr fi tasdir bada'i' li al-'iraq muqabil bitrul lam yasil].

Dr. Fariz announced that Iraq's debts to Jordan equal the value of oil imports over two years, excluding 1996.

He said that the value of Jordan's exports to Iraq last year amounted to $420 million, mostly industries in which Jordan's participation was only 10 or 15 percent, namely Jordanian labor. The accumulation of debts and the continued exports to Iraq, he said, have exhausted Jordan's reserve, and we are now trying to obtain oil shipments for storage purposes.

The CBJ said that Jordan exported some items to Iraq in 1995, such as chemical materials and detergents worth $51 million, cooking oil worth $190 million, human and animal medicine and pesticides worth $58 million, buses and caravans worth $40 million, eggs and chickens worth of $6.7 million, textiles and cloth worth $4.5 million, and paper and carton worth of $7 million. [passage omitted]

Jordan: King Reportedly To Undergo Ear Surgery in United States

JN1503174496 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1700 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] His majesty the king has left for the Untied States, where he will undergo surgery to cure a perforated ear drum.

The king cut short his visit to the United States last week to attend the Peacemakers Summit in Egypt on Wednesday.

His majesty was seen off at the airport by his Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan, the regent; the prime minister; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdallah; speakers of both Houses of Parliament; and other senior civil and military officials.

The king was accompanied by Chief of the Royal Court 'Awn al-Khasawinah; the king's military secretary, Prince Talal Bin-Muhammad; and his military adviser Humayd al-Fayiz.

Lebanon: Buwayz on Outcome of Sharm al-Shaykh Summit

MM1503140896 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 15 Mar 96 p 3

[Interview with Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz by Mahmud 'Ali in Cairo on 13 March]

[FBIS Translated Text] ['Ali] The peacemakers' conference ended a few hours ago. Although there was a significant Arab presence, Lebanon was absent. Does this absence mean opposition to the summit?

[Buwayz] This summit was held in the wake of the recent incidents in Israel. The prevailing political and psychological atmosphere was dominated by these incidents only. We were concerned that the summit would focus on only one issue, namely the violence which affected Israel, and would not address the violence that Israel is practicing. We know that violence is caused by a political problem, which makes it necessary to address this problem. As far as we are concerned, we were not opposed to the summit. Instead, through our nonparticipation, we expressed our concern that it would only address Israel's problems without looking into the problems of others. Everyone knows that 15 percent of Lebanese territory is occupied by the Israeli Army which is launching daily air raids and shelling Lebanese territories with cluster and nail bombs, and is also detaining Lebanese citizens in camps — instead of jails — which do not come under international supervision and where human rights are not respected. Hence we were concerned that this summit would overlook Israel's terrorism, sometimes the cause of retaliation as the expression of the only form of legitimate self-defense. We were also concerned that the summit would ignore the peoples' right to fight occupation despite the fact that most summit members (states participating in the conference) have exercised this right.... When a state is unable to regain its rights by driving out foreign occupation from its land, and when it feels that the Security Council, the United Nations in general, and international policies are all incapable of imposing these rights, the people resort to resistance. This resistance takes on different shapes, seeks support, is generally independent of the state, and mostly will try to acquire support through any means. We cannot deny the rights of this resistance, and we cannot confuse this situation with terrorist situations that have no legitimate reason or right. That is the reason we did not attend the summit. This absence is not a condemnation or opposition to the conference, but rather [an expression of] reservations about its potential outcome. We were concerned that some issues which have nothing to do with this conference might be raised, such as the boycott of Israel, or that it would unjustly condemn all action by the resistance in order to satisfy Israel.

['Ali] Does this mean that Lebanon's rejection of terrorism is linked to Israeli withdrawal from its territories?

[Buwayz] I would like to stress that, as the first victim of terrorism, Lebanon cannot afford not to reject terrorism. However, it does also make a distinction between the terrorism it rejects and its people exercising the right of resistance to the occupation until Israel withdraws from the south. No state can become an "Israeli police force" to protect and defend Israel as an occupation force. However, when Israel shows its commitment to total withdrawal from Lebanese territories, enabling Lebanon to regain sovereignty over its territories, the state will then be responsible, through the regime's forces, for maintaining security along the border. The Lebanese state has clearly and openly reiterated that it will ensure that not a single shot will be fired after Israel withdraws behind the internationally recognized borders.

['Ali] You mentioned your pre-summit concerns. What are your views now on the summit's statement?

[Buwayz] This statement defined the broad lines, and therefore a committee has been set up to examine the details of these broad lines. In fact, we did not disagree with the conference's topics, but we are concerned that implementation would not distinguish between a just and equitable situation and one that would lack the elements of justice and right. We shall wait to see what practical approach is adopted toward the conference's topics. The statement in itself is not important, but the way in which it will be implemented is.

['Ali] Will the Sharm al-Shaykh summit reactivate the peace process?

[Buwayz] We are basically for reactivating the peace process. We believe that tackling the root of the problem and its political implications should minimize this problem's violent symptoms. Therefore, the way to achieve peace and reaffirm stability in the Middle East is by reactivating the peace process and putting an end to deceit, delays, and maneuvers. However, the problem cannot be entirely solved if only the violent symptoms are addressed.

['Ali] Are there any new developments on the Lebanese-Israeli track?

[Buwayz] So far, none. We became involved in the Madrid operation over four years ago because of specific issues, including the implementation of international [UN] Resolutions 242, 338, and 425, and the land-for-peace principle. Those who participated in this process were expected to accept these principles, and we should have immediately moved on toward implementing them. And yet, some four years later, we are still discussing these principles. Lebanon became involved after it was given clear assurances, through exchanges with the U.S. side, that Resolution 425 would be implemented, and yet we see that this resolution has been somewhat left out of the peace process lexicon.

['Ali] How true are reports that negotiations on Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territories were held in Lebanon's absence?

[Buwayz] These reports are untrue, and were denied by both the U.S. and the Syrian sides. I would like to make it clear that only Lebanon's government is entitled to speak on its behalf, and that any attempt at bypassing Lebanon or creating trouble between Lebanon and Syria will not succeed. Lebanon, with its government and armed forces, is ready to assume all responsibilities whenever Israel decides to withdraw from occupied Lebanese territories. The Lebanese Government alone will then maintain security and stability and prevent any violations from taking place along the borders.

Lebanon: Defense Minister—Summit 'Scandal,' 'Disaster'

NC1503175196 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] National Defense Minister Muhsin Dallul has described the Sharm al-Shaykh summit as a scandal and a disaster. He praised the Lebanese Government stance on the summit, saying it was historic. He said that continuing the struggle and showing patience will eventually bring victory. He noted that the fall of each martyr restates that we are worthy of life. He said that peace means pride and war entails sacrifice. He said that anyone who makes sacrifices for war must be wary when it comes to peace. He was lecturing in Ba'labakk today to mark solidarity with south Lebanon and Western al-Biqa'. He noted a major furor in political circles and division over the media law and the decision banning demonstrations.

Lebanon: Dallul—Summit Gives Israel Permission To Attack

NC1703175596 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Defense Minister Muhsin Dallul has said that the Sharm al-Shaykh summit was a green light for Israel to launch a major aggression against Lebanon and the Arabs. He stressed the ability to foil the Israeli scheme and said the Army is ready to perform its duties.

Commenting on Israeli threats and attacks against the south and the Western al-Biqa', Dallul said in a statement at noon today: When we refused to participate in the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, we were aware that the summit was a green light for Israel to carry out a major act of aggression against the Arabs and Lebanon. We then said that the real terrorism is represented by Israel's policy and practices.

Lebanon: Buwayz Notes Contacts To Curb Worsening Tensions in South

NC1503135296 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1115 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz has revealed that practical measures have actually been adopted and diplomatic contacts are under way to curb the deterioration in south Lebanon.

Returning from the meetings of the Arab Foreign Ministers Council in Cairo, Buwayz said that the Council recommended what Lebanon has always insisted on: namely, that it is not possible to address the issue of violence in isolation from the political plan.

Buwayz pointed to a proposal put forward during the meetings calling for reconvening the Madrid conference. I think that what happened was intentions were not given concrete shape, he said. He hoped that the peace process will be more activate so that the hope of establishing a just and comprehensive peace can be realized.

Lebanon: Buwayz Returns From Cairo, Remarks on South

NC1503144696 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1215 GMT 15 Mar 96

[News conference by Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz, after returning to Beirut from Cairo, with unidentified correspondents—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Buwayz] I do not know if a green light has indeed been given to punish Lebanon or any other country. As a matter of fact, President Clinton's participation in the Israeli cabinet meeting does not necessarily mean that Lebanon will be punished. However, the deterioration of the situation in the south and the Israeli acts of aggression did not wait for the Sharm al- Shaykh summit or the incidents that occurred in Israel. These acts of violence and terrorism in the south have been going on for a long time and Israel uses numerous pretexts to justify them. Sometimes, these acts take place as part of domestic maneuvers, at others, they are intended to send messages to regional and international parties, and at other times, they embody the bad relations between the Israeli army and certain Israeli leaders. Thus, it is difficult to define the causes for the deterioration in the south.

[Correspondent] How will Lebanon deal with this deterioration?

[Buwayz] I believe that after the operations were carried out in Israel, certain measure were taken by the Lebanese armed forces and diplomatic contacts were held as a precaution for any eventuality. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: Al-Hariri Interviewed on Cairo Visit, Peace

NC1603074596 Cairo MENA in Arabic
2150 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Mar (MENA) — Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri has expressed his country's eagerness to enhance cooperation with Egypt. He added that his visit to Cairo, which will begin tomorrow, Saturday [16 March], seeks to strengthen the historic relations between Egypt and Lebanon.

In an interview with AL-AHRAM to be published Saturday, al-Hariri added that during his visit to Egypt, he hopes to increase opportunities for cooperation between the two sisterly countries and establish the proper framework for developing these relations in the future, in addition to enhancing economic and cultural cooperation. He pointed out that the purpose of his talks is to boost investment, prevent dual taxation, increase trade between Egypt and Lebanon, and discuss the latest political developments in the region.

When asked if he thought it was true that Israel believed Lebanon to be considered the weakest link in the chain in the Arab-Israeli conflict, al-Hariri said that if Israel believes that Syria represents a strategic security threat against it, Lebanon in fact does not represent a strategic security threat to Israel. It represents a security problem for Israel because of the anti- occupation resistance operations, he added. He pointed out that Israel must recognize Security Council Resolution 425, and if it does, the Lebanese Army will be prepared to guarantee security in the south after the Israeli withdrawal. He stressed that Lebanon will not permit Israel to drive a wedge between Lebanon and Syria, adding that Syria will not sign a peace agreement with Israel until after talks on the Lebanese track have been completed. He noted that when the major problems between Syria and Israel are overcome, the Lebanese track will be activated.

On the conditions of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, al- Hariri stressed the need for these refugees to return to their territories. He added that resettling them in Lebanon is impossible because it would upset the sectarian makeup in Lebanon.

Regarding the political plans proposed for the Middle East in the future, the Lebanese prime minister said that Middle Easternism is a deviation from Arabism and that the post-peace relations among countries depends on the circumstances. He noted that Lebanon, with its huge resources and openness to the West, will be in the forefront of the countries in the region competing with Israel.

The Lebanese prime minister reiterated his country's absolute rejection of terrorism and extremism. He added that his country does not accept that it is said to be a training center for terrorists or a launching pad for its activity in the region. In the meantime, he called for not getting involved with the legitimate right in order to resist occupation and terrorism. He noted in this regard that once the Israeli occupation ends, the Lebanese resistance operations will come to a halt and Hizballah, which Israel uses as an excuse for not withdrawing from southern Lebanon, will become a political party that will operate like other Lebanese parties. He added that the Lebanese Government in the middle of next month will present to the Chamber of Deputies a draft election law that will be acceptable to all Lebanese sects.

Lebanon: Al-Hariri on Egypt, Israel, 'Resistance'

NC1703205396 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic
2000 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri has disclosed that during his talks with his Egyptian counterpart, Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri, he expressed Lebanon's interest in placing one of the free zones in Lebanon at the disposal of Egyptian businessmen to serve as a center for exporting to Lebanon and abroad. This zone will not serve as a manufacturing center but will be used for storing goods, something like a permanent exhibition.

Al-Hariri told his interlocutors that political ties with Egypt are strong and their cultural and historical life are deep, noting that these ties have not been translated properly on the economic level.

During a dialogue at the Center of Strategic Studies at AL-AHRAM newspaper, al-Hariri expressed Lebanon's belief in peace as a strategic option. He underlined Lebanon's readiness for this peace. However, he pointed out that Israel has not yet decided its option regarding implementation of Security Council Resolution 425. He likened the Israeli occupation of the south and the Western al-Biqa' to a poisoned bullet in the Lebanese body. He noted that the justification for the resistance's existence is clear as long as parts of Lebanon are still occupied. However, he did not want to explain his views on whether he considers the operations of the Lebanese resistance in the south and the suicidal operations in occupied Palestine as equal. He declared his refusal to disarm the resistance before the withdrawal of the Israeli occupation forces. He stressed that the Syrians will not sign any agreement with Israel before Lebanon is ready to sign.

Lebanon: Israel Threatens Intensified Response to Hizballah

NC1503131196 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1115 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel today threatened to intensify its military operations in Lebanon in response to Hizballah's escalating attacks. The Israeli threat comes in the wake of an operation the resistance carried out near al-'Ayshiyah yesterday, during which eight Israeli soldiers were wounded.

At noon today, Israeli warplanes flew intensive sorties over the south, conducting mock raids over Hizballah-controlled areas.

Lebanon: 'Terrorists' Attack SLA Positions, Patrol

NC1503150696 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 1430 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The terrorists resumed their attacks on the border area today. They fired on two positions manned by South Lebanese Army [SLA] troops in the western sector without causing any casualties. The terrorists also directed gunfire at a SLA patrol in Sujud. The SLA patrol suffered no casualties.

The SLA and Israeli forces returned the fire.

Lebanon: Israeli Attacks, 'Resistance' Operations Reported

NC1603081996 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY correspondent in Tyre reported that, at 0700 today, the Israeli occupation forces bombarded the outskirts of Haddathah, Bra'shit, and Sribbin while enemy helicopters flew overhead.

The Israeli attacks on several liberated areas have continued during the past 24 hours, damaging a number of houses in some villages.

An Amal Movement statement said that in retaliation for the Israeli attacks, its fighters carried out two operations against the enemy patrols inside the occupied strip. It said that a mechanized patrol was attacked on a Bayt Lif - al-Qawzah road, in which a vehicle was destroyed and those in it were killed or wounded. The enemy's helicopters landed sending some soldiers to rescue the patrol. A clash ensued between the enemy forces and the Amal fighters, who attacked the soldiers with machine guns and grenades, killing and wounding a number of them.

The statement also said that another group was simultaneously attacking the Bayt Lif post, which received direct hits that resulted in fatalities and equipment damage.

The Islamic Resistance also announced that one of its groups ambushed an agent's [South Lebanese Army] patrol on a Sujud - al-Rayhan road. A number of the agents were killed and wounded and a vehicle went up in flames following the attack.

Lebanon: Hizballah Takes 'Extraordinary' Precautions, Warns Israel

NC1603085396 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli threats by Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq, and Deputy War Minister Ori Or, in the presence of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, are clear evidence of the U.S. blessing for any terrorist actions that Israel might carry out against Lebanon, particularly as these threats came only one day after the Sharm al- Shaykh summit and after Washington contributed $100 million to the Zionist enemy for what they called fighting terrorism.

After holding Syria responsible for the recent attacks on the occupation forces' positions and patrols, the enemy's prime minister said that he will retaliate in the appropriate manner while Ori Or said that Israel will step up its military actions in Lebanon.

Meanwhile, reports said that the Israeli forces all along the borders of the security strip have been put on alert.

According to Hizballah sources, any aggression against the south will trigger a harsh response. These leading party sources have stressed that the occupation forces' military options should not be exaggerated. They noted that the resistance has taken extraordinary precautions that will prevent the enemy from achieving its direct or indirect objectives. They said that no Israeli action will be allowed to pass without retaliation or a heavy price.

The Hizballah sources added that the enemy has tried to appear as one trying to show self-restraint and so it was natural for it to act like this when preparations for the Sharm al-Shaykh summit were underway, during the summit, and during the U.S. President's visit to occupied Jerusalem. The sources went on to say: As soon as Clinton left and Israel obtained the necessary guarantee, the latter showed its readiness to undertake what it termed retaliatory actions.

Hizballah's leading sources noted that Israel's threats will remain weak in view of the apparent futile military options that are available to it, especially as the resistance succeeded in the past few weeks in inflicting blows at different times that killed a number of military personnel.

The sources warned that any Israeli adventure in the south will trigger a harsh retaliation from the resistance and a rocket shelling of the northern settlements as soon as [Lebanese] villages come under new attacks.

Lebanon: SLA Soldier Reportedly Killed in Amal Attack

NC1603095496 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0915 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Amal Movement said in a statement that one of its units attacked a South Lebanese Army [SLA] member near Kafr Falus at 0810 today, killing him instantly. It added that a white Mercedes arrived and took the SLA member's body to the occupied security strip.

Lebanon: Israeli Helicopters Strafe Areas in South

NC1603202896 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 2015 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This evening two Israeli helicopters strafed the southern edges of western al-Biqa', Birkat Jabbur, Jabal Abu Rashid, and the woods of al-Qatrani and al-Sariri.

Lebanon: Israeli Shelling, Flights Reported

NC1703134196 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1215 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli forces shelled the outskirts of Haris, Haddatha, 'Ayta al-Jabal, Sribbin, and Bra'shit this morning. Meanwhile, Israeli warplanes staged low-altitude reconnaissance flights over al-Nabatiyah and Iqlim al-Tuffah, drawing antiaircraft fire. Israeli gunboats fired at fishing boats off of the al-Qulaylah coast south of Tyre at dawn today.

Lebanon: Hizballah—Suicide Attacks Will Fight Invasion

NC1703151896 Paris AFP in English 1448 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, March 17 (AFP) — The head of the Iranian-backed Hizballah warned Sunday [17 March] he would put a suicide bomber "on every crossroads" in south Lebanon if Israel tried to invade its northern neighbour.

"An invasion would not be a stroll" for Israel, Shaykh Hasan Nasrallah said in a speech in Beirut. He said he would "place a suicide bomber on every crossroads if Israel dared to invade again."

Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982, before pulling back to a self- declared "security zone" along the border in south Lebanon in 1985.

Shaykh Nasrallah was responding to Israel's announcement that it had put its forces on alert along the border and its threat to attack Lebanese civilian areas if Hizballah guerrillas continued their operations.

The shaykh declared that the Israelis would soon be forced to withdraw, "humiliated," from the occupied zone.

"Our land and our liberty will only be recovered through conflict and our blood," he said.

The armed wing of the Hizballah (Party of God) spearheads anti- Israeli attacks in the security zone. It announced on Sunday that one of its guerrillas had been killed the previous day during an operation against Israeli forces.

The coordinator of Israeli activities in Lebanon, Uri Lubrani, said Saturday that the Jewish state would break a 1993 pledge not to bomb civilian areas if Hizballah continued its attacks.

The pledge came after a week of intense Israeli bombardments of south Lebanon in July 1993, when Israel promised to halt attacks on civilian areas in exchange for a Hizballah agreement to stop attacking northern Israel in a deal brokered by Iran, Syria and the United States.

But Shaykh Nasrallah said such threats "have no effect." "They violate the accord, we violate it, so what are they threatening to do? They know fine well that after seven days of massive bombardments in 1993, our fighters still had their Katyusha rockets on their shoulders and carried out deadly attacks" in the security zone.

Hizballah has stepped up its attacks in south Lebanon where five Israeli soldiers have been killed and 17 others wounded in the past 12 days.

Shaykh Nasrallah also renewed a proposal to hand over the bodies of two Israeli soldiers in exchange for the liberation of Lebanese prisoners, and said contacts were under way with Israel's proxy South Lebanon Army for further prisoner exchanges.

Lebanon: Army, 'Resistance' on Alert for Israeli Attack

NC1703173396 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Lebanon is making obvious efforts to confront Israeli challenges and provocations. These provocations are represented both by verbal statements and by military reinforcements inside the occupied strip. Uri Lubrani, the so-called coordinator of the Israeli Government activities in southern Lebanon, said Israel will be forced to respond to the recent escalation in south Lebanon. But it does not necessarily intend to attack the villages from which Hizballah elements stage their attacks, as he said.

The Lebanese Army Command took defensive measures in the south, the Western al-Biqa', and Beirut's suburbs to confront any Israeli military operation. For its part, the Resistance took precautionary measures in its regions. Lebanese diplomats are also on alert, encouraging Lebanon's friends to make urgent moves.

Lebanon: Syrian Officers Said Viewing Hizballah Training

TA1703095996 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 17 Mar 96 p A5

[Report by Eytan Rabin]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Sources in south Lebanon yesterday claimed that Hizballah has started carrying out training and military maneuvers in Lebanon's al-Biqa' in the presence of Syrian officers. IDF [Israel Defense Forces] sources say they do not know whether this report is true. Hizballah has recently received sophisticated weapons, including night-vision equipment, and is carrying out much training activity. Usually, however, this is done without overt Syrian attendance. [passage omitted]

Syria: al-Shar' Defends Nonparticipation in Peacemakers Summit

JN1503183296 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1654 GMT 15 Mar 96

[Statement by Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' in Cairo on 14 March; from "The Week's Event" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] It would have been possible to prepare for the conference. It would have been possible to form a preparatory committee and give it enough time to realize the aims and what could result from the summit.

The Syrian leadership studied all the possibilities and facts — given that Syria suffers from Israeli occupation and that for more than four years Israel has used pretexts to prevent progress in the peace process and to avoid any decision on the issues cited on the talks' agenda. Therefore, the Syrian leadership decided not to participate.

I can also add that some of the Arab speeches at the Sharm al- Shaykh summit were good. They expressed the Arab position and, therefore, the Syrian Arab position as well. Our decision not to attend the conference was not because we feared that our Arab brothers would make unsatisfactory speeches or because we had doubts about their stands, never. Syria's nonparticipation in the conference was a result of patient study. Such a conference, given the circumstances in which it was held and the tense atmosphere that accompanied its convocation, serves Israel's interests but does not serve the interest of the Arabs.

We are certain that if the conference had been given enough time, if there had been in-depth discussions, and if objective opinions had been exchanged — and to reiterate our understanding and denunciation of terrorism, distinguishing between terrorism and nonterrorism, such as the struggle related to resisting the occupation — if all these issues had been given time to be threshed out by all the parties at the conference, then we would not have hesitated to participate.

We felt that the conference was convened too hastily to discuss a sudden development — even though the subject is very sensitive, and we are aware of this sensitivity. Syria has repeatedly denounced the killing of innocent people and has distinguished between fighting occupation and killing innocent people. If all these issues were very clear and if consultations had been held before the conference was convened, the results would have been better and the statement that was issued would have been more balanced.

Syria: Press on Sharm al-Shaykh Summit, Israel

JN1603142596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 16 Mar 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial under the headline "Israel Is an Aggressor and not a Victim," the newspaper TISHRIN points out that the Arab League Council, which convened at the level of foreign ministers, supported the legitimate Syrian and Lebanese rights to regain the Golan and southern Lebanon which are occupied by Israel.

TISHRIN says: The Arab League Council denounced the repeated Israeli attacks on Lebanese territory and urged the international community to take measures to end the Israeli maritime siege of the Lebanese coasts and release all Lebanese prisoners and detainees who were kidnapped and jailed by Israel. The Arab League Council also denounced the policy of collective punishment Israel is pursuing against the residents of the occupied territories.

TISHRIN adds: Contrary to the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, at which the allies of Israel tried to depict it as a victim worthy of aid and support, the Arab League Council was eager to recall Israel's real image as an aggressive entity that seeks to occupy others' territories and pursues large-scale savage repression.

TISHRIN asserts that Israel has pursued wide terrorism in the Arab region and spread the policy of terrorism. Terrorism, in itself, is alien to the Arabs. The Arabs only resorted to resistance out of self-defense when they saw their sons being killed, taken to detention camps and tortured, or expelled from their homes and also when they saw the Zionist settlers confiscating their lands and denying them drinking water.

TISHRIN explains that there are millions of Palestinian refugees in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and elsewhere. In addition, there are two million Palestinians under the Israeli siege, which has been imposed since 1967, who are denied the simplest rights.

TISHRIN notes that the allegations about peace have not fooled anyone. This is because the Oslo agreements have not achieved peace or acknowledged any of the legitimate Palestinian rights. They even stripped the Palestinians of the right to self-determination and flagrantly confirmed Israel's trusteeship over them on the political, military, and security levels. Lebanon is a crystal- clear example of the growing and escalating Israeli terrorism. Meanwhile, the international community stands idly by and continues to use double standards.

Concluding, TISHRIN says: Syria did not participate in the Sharm al-Shaykh summit because it was not designed to promote the peace process but to support Israel and depict it as a victim at a time when it is actually an occupying force which is controlling the Golan, southern Lebanon, Jerusalem, and the West Bank by force and terrorism. Nothing has changed in Tel Aviv's policy of aggression. The peace process has lost much of its momentum and is surrounded by dangers.

TISHRIN adds: Syria believes in a just and comprehensive peace. That is why it called on the two cosponsors of the peace process to resume the Madrid conference, clarify things, and recall the bases and terms of reference.

The newspaper AL-THAWRAH asserts that what threatens to undermine the peace efforts is the continued Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan as well as Israel's insistence on not implementing the resolutions of international legitimacy and its failure to comply with the will of the international community.

AL-THAWRAH explains that the will of the international community considers Israel's occupation and annexation of the Syrian Golan as null and void and illegal. The paper says: Israel has wasted the efforts of the past four and a half years by procrastinating and evading a pledge to withdraw from the occupied Golan in accordance with the bases and pillars of the Madrid conference and the land- for-peace formula. As a result, the peace process has faced a severe impasse as well as jolts and obstacles which threaten to halt the peace efforts.

AL-THAWRAH adds: Syria has always sought to open the way for peace. The Syrian position has never been a problem. In fact, the problem has been, and continues to be, the Israeli policy that wants both land and peace. As a result, the peace process faced many obstacles and serious events, including the acts of violence and counter violence for which Israel is held responsible. This is because the record of Israeli terrorism contains thousands of black pages.

AL-THAWRAH recalls the murder of the international mediator Bernadotte, the setting of fire to the al-Aqsa Mosque, the demolition of the houses of the heads of Arab citizens, and the physical liquidations in and outside the occupied territories of anyone who waged struggle to liberate his land from Israeli occupation.

AL-THAWRAH says: Syria has always condemned terrorism. According to Israel, however, terrorism means resisting the occupation at a time when Israel justifies the daily killings, the breaking of Arab citizens' bones, the demolition of Arab homes, and the confiscation of Arab lands.

Concluding, AL-THAWRAH says: Syria honestly seeks peace and stability. That is why it yesterday called on the two cosponsors of the peace process to resume the peace conference which convened in Madrid. Syria also reemphasized its commitment to the bases and objectives of the peace process which started at the Madrid conference because this will provide the appropriate atmosphere to remove the current obstacles and champion the efforts designed to achieve a just and comprehensive peace. Leader al-Asad stressed this by saying: What we, the Arabs, honestly and sincerely seek is a just peace on the basis of the UN resolutions.

Syria: Press—Summit To Increase Israel's 'Intransigence'

JN1703093296 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 17 Mar 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a commentary, AL-THAWRAH writes on the Sharm al-Shaykh summit. The paper says that only peace was absent from the essence of the summit, for which more time should have been spent on preparation and consideration, with the participation of those concerned more than Israel itself with regional security and stability. Since the Madrid conference, the paper says, Israel has been evading the requirements of a just, comprehensive peace. The paper says: Had Israel been sincere in its peace intentions, peace would have been achieved. This is because sincerity of intentions means, more than anything else, withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, southern Lebanon, and the Golan Heights. Only this would defuse the crisis and pave the way for peace, stability, and security without encroaching on anybody's interests.

AL-THAWRAH adds: The results of the Sharm al-Shaykh conference will mean nothing for Israel but an additional reason for intransigence in the peace process. The peace process itself was more worthy of attention by the international community in general and the cosponsors of the peace process in particular. The paper notes that more efforts are needed to reactivate the peace process according to the clear basis specified by the Madrid frames of reference and to advance it along the path set for it so as to arrive at its objective, which is a just, comprehensive peace. In itself, such a peace constitutes the true beginning of ending violence and counter violence. Israel is responsible for such violence and its escalation.

Concluding, AL-THAWRAH says: Syria called for the resumption of the Madrid conference to consider why the peace process has fumbled and to find ways to save it from collapse. Syria will remain committed to the bases of a just, comprehensive peace, responding to the efforts exerted to achieve peace that ensures justice, equality, and dignity.

TISHRIN comments on the Israeli threats to explode the situation in southern Lebanon. The paper says: The Lebanese-Israeli talks have been stalled for a long time because of Israel's refusal to implement UN Security Council Resolution 425. Besides Resolutions 242 and 338, Resolution 425 is considered one of the frames of reference of the peace process in the region.

TISHRIN indicates that the problem with the Israeli rulers is that they want the Syrians and Lebanese to trust their good intentions without translating any of them into reality. Syria, for example, has up to this moment obtained no explicit Israeli commitment to fully withdraw from the Golan to the 4 June 1967 lines in return for peace. Meanwhile, Lebanon has not obtained any Israeli pledge to fully withdraw from southern Lebanon. Moreover, the Israel attacks have increased in quantity and in quality. The paper stresses that the occupation is the cause of tension. The solution lies in ending the occupation and withdrawal from southern Lebanon and the Golan in return for a durable and just peace with Lebanon and Syria and even [muta'adilah] and equitable [mutakafi'ah] security arrangements to enhance peace, stability, and tranquility.

Concluding its editorial, TISHRIN says that achieving regional security and stability lies, first and foremost, in Israel's full response to the resolutions of international legitimacy and withdrawal of its troops to its former lines so that each party will have their due rights. Syria and Lebanon have rights. The Golan has been Syrian since time immemorial, and southern Lebanon is an indivisible part of Lebanon. Only full Israeli withdrawal would ensure the establishment of a just, comprehensive, durable peace and unshakable security throughout the region.

In another commentary, AL-THAWRAH writes: Under any pretext, the sensitivity and seriousness of the current phase and the unexpected surprises of time tolerate no more hesitation, laxity, carelessness, waiting, and indifferent watching of what is going on. The targets of the schemes and the magnitude of the posed and impending danger are too serious to be confronted by any Arab country individually and in isolation from other Arab brothers. Everyone, like it or not, is part of the Israeli calculations and ambitions and is targeted by the military arsenal and war machine, in which the principle of superiority over all the Arabs collectively is taken. This necessitates maintaining at least a minimum level of Arab solidarity and joint action to ensure the impregnability and solidity of the pan-Arab front.

Syria: Editorial—Summit Did Not Contribute to Peace

JN1703132396 Damascus SYRIA TIMES in English 16 Mar 96 p 5

[Editorial by Hisaham Bukhari: "Peace Absent at Sharm al-Shaykh"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] It is a big mistake to think, even for a while, that Sharm al-Shaykh summit conference has contributed to the issue of peace. On the contrary, the decisions taken and the analysis reveal that the summit was a world gathering in support of Israel and serve its schemes and plots in the region. The summit statement concentrated on fighting terrorism and did not even try to differentiate between terrorism as a condemned criminal act and national struggle which is a legitimate right of every occupied nation.

Sharm al-Shaykh was called "conference of peacemakers" although peace was the only absent element during the meeting. Almost all the speakers spoke about general matters and showed exaggerated concern and sympathy with Israel which does not know what is the meaning of peace because it is practising terrorism, aggression, and occupation every day and every moment paying deaf ears to international law and all human rights norms.

Thus, the summit conference has jumped to the results directly without caring to look into the details and factors which led to violence in this part of the world, ignoring the thousands of Arab martyrs who were killed by Israeli guns and bullets.

Therefore, it is a good idea to remind Israel and the world that there are half a million Palestinian refugees driven from their homes by Israel and found shelter in Syria, and that it is natural for those refugees to have their own organizations and to cling fast to the UN Security Council resolutions which guaranteed for them the rights to repatriation and compensation, of course, unless Israel is plotting to liquidate those refugees and easily close this file under the pretext of peace. Syria did not participate in the said conference because it was clear from the very beginning that the major aim of the conference is to support Israel and its plots at the expense of the Arabs and their rights.

And this was crystal clear in the final statement of the summit which did not even refer to the daily Israeli shelling of South Lebanese villages and towns, the issue of the occupied Arab lands and the issue of the

Palestinian people who are under siege and the obstacles placed by Israel in order to hinder any progress in the peace process.

Jumping over the truth and ignoring the reasons for violence and counter-violence is of no use and won't ever serve justice and stability.

Syria: Jordanian Opposition Parties Hail Sharm al-Shaykh Boycott

JN1603191096 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 16 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jordanian national opposition parties today hailed Syria's position on the Sharm al-Shaykh meeting, which was arranged in unprecedented haste to promote Israel's interests and serve its objectives.

A statement by these parties said: The Jordanian national opposition parties greatly appreciate Syria's refusal to take part in this meeting and its efforts to reveal its objectives. The Jordanian parties also appreciate the position of the Lebanese Government, which withstood pressure and refused to take part in the meeting. The opposition parties also hailed the steadfast resistance in southern Lebanon.

The statement added that the meeting in Sharm al-Shaykh and the decisions issued there were designed to be a festival of support for Israel against all forms of Arab action for freedom, democracy, dignity, and peace.

The Jordanian national parties said that the acknowledgement that there are squadrons of U.S. aircraft in Jordanian territory — regardless of the justifications — amounts to political and military interference in Jordan's affairs and poses a threat to the security of neighboring Arab countries.

Syria: Paper Condemns Terrorism, Defends Damascus-Based Factions

JN1603205296 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 2015 GMT 16 Mar 96

[Report from the "Panorama" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] Syria, through the newspaper SYRIA TIMES, condemned terrorism. Justifying the presence of the offices of the 10 Palestinian [opposition] factions in Damascus, SYRIA TIMES says: They have the right to resist Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory. Israel and the entire world should be reminded that a half million Palestinian refugees who were expelled from their homeland and houses by Israel came to Syria. It is natural for them to have their own organizations in Damascus and to abide by the international resolutions that guarantee their right to repatriation, unless Israel is plotting to liquidate them and to close their file on the pretext of peace.

Syria: al-Asad Receives Phone Call From Libya's al-Qadhdhafi

JN1703193996 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 17 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hafiz al-Asad this evening received a telephone call from Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, leader of the 1 September Revolution in Libya. The two sides discussed the situation in the region and current developments.

Syria: Commentary Defends Palestinian Refugee 'Organizations'

JN1503163996 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 15 Mar 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Arab foreign ministers are discussing the regional peace process and the fact that it is stumbling due to Israel's intransigence and noncompliance with the terms of reference, the essence of which is exchanging land for peace. The Israeli Government exploited the Sharm al-Shaykh summit to peddle a draft law in the Knesset that stipulates that returning the Golan to Syria is conditional on the approval of two-thirds of the Knesset members.

This simply contravenes the UN resolutions that consider the occupation of the Golan a violation of the law and stipulate that all measures that entrench the occupation be canceled in order to implement international resolutions and advance the peace process, which is based on these resolutions.

If the Israeli Government is serious about pursuing such an approach, then the four-and-a-half years during which the peace talks were held under the sponsorship and with the participation of the U.S Administration were no more than a waste of time. This constitutes a frustration for the U.S. and international efforts to realize comprehensive peace in the region.

Under the sponsorship of the United States, Syria negotiated with three successive Israeli Governments: Shamir's government, then Rabin's government, and then Peres' government. However, no positive outcome was reached despite all of Syria's efforts and initiatives to ensure the success of the peace process. The Israeli terms are endless and constitute a stumbling block to any chance for progress. Every time one obstacle is removed, another emerges, and so on. Moreover, it was Israel that suspended the recent Maryland talks.

As for the clamor created by Israel over the so-called terrorism, we would like to point out that Syria condemned and still condemns terrorism on every occasion. Terrorism, from the Israeli viewpoint, is national resistance of occupation. However, everyone knows that national resistance is a legitimate right, as stipulated in UN charters. It is a right that people have practice over history. Occupying other people's lands and punishing the inhabitants and civilians collectively, as practiced by Israel, is the actual terrorism.

We would like to remind Israel and the influential states in the international community that half a million Palestinian refugees who were displaced from their homes by Israel found refuge in Syria. It is only natural that these refugees should have their own organizations and that they should adhere to UN resolutions, which guarantee their right of return and compensation. Does Israel want to wipe them out of existence on the pretexts of peaceful intentions whose veracity has yet to be proved? There are many other refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, and other Arab and non-Arab states.

Syria refrained from participating in the Sharm al-Shaykh summit because it was obvious from the beginning that this summit, which was held quickly and without preparation, arrangements, or an agenda, was mainly aimed at supporting Israel and its policies at the expense of Arab rights. The issue of occupied Arab lands was absent. The cause of the Palestinian people, who are under siege, was covered up. The Israeli shelling of southern Lebanon on a daily basis was ignored. The obstacles placed by Israel to block the peace process were not topics for discussion. The diversion of the peace process from its aims and principles is a matter that was overlooked, as well.

Israel exploited the Sharm al-Shaykh summit to tighten its siege on the Palestinian people and to continue to starve them, to escalate its aggression in southern Lebanon, and to evade the requirements of the negotiations on the Syrian track — talks that have been going on for a long time without leading to a full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan and the implementation of the Security Council resolutions that govern the peace process. On the contrary, the voices of Israeli Knesset members are being raised to demand the full Judaization of the Golan.

Who can save the peace process from this situation? Syria has called for reconvening the Madrid conference and for emphasizing the bases of peace and its terms of reference after they were drowned by events. Will the concerned international bodies respond before it is too late? Overlooking facts is of no use, and ignoring the reasons behind violence and counterviolence does not serve stability and does not guarantee peace for any party. Justice, returning rights to their owners, and everyone's compliance with the resolutions of international legitimacy and consensus are the only guarantees for the elimination of violence and for security and peace to prevail, which is needed by the region and its people and which the entire world is seeking.

Syria: Editorial Assails 'Double-Standard' Terrorism Policy

JN1803123696 Damascus SYRIA TIMES in English 18 Mar 96 p 5

[Editorial by Riad Zayn: "The Double-Standard Policy"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Totally mistaken are those who try to brand patriots and people struggling for liberation, freedom, and independence as "terrorists," and to show Israel, at the same time, as the victim of "aggression" and the cycle of violence which the occupied Arab territories have recently experienced.

The course of events manifested through Israel's incessant attacks against civilians in South Lebanon and the unbridled policy of collective punishment being severely implemented against the Palestinians in the occupied territories have unequivocally shown that Israel is an aggressor state that has been feverishly seeking to perpetuate occupation and hegemony, and is still carrying out acts of aggression and savage oppression at a large scale.

Indeed, Israel is exclusively the state which has practiced terrorism over the past decades. Needless to say that Israel was founded with the help of massacres and acts of untold terrorism committed against the indigenous Arab people of Palestine and neighbouring Arab countries. Israel's flagrant policy of occupation, aggression, and oppression has produced terrorism in the region, which is alien to the Arabs. The Arab victims of Israel's aggression and occupation have resorted to armed resistance in terms of self-defence, and only to defend their legitimate rights to freedom, independence, and a decent living.

It is indeed surprising that some big powers continue to pursue a double-standard policy regarding terrorism, and to keep silent about Israel's unceasing sinister practices. This policy is irrational and grave, and would only enhance Israel's intransigence and arrogance and would aggravate tension in the region.

Syria has the right not to take part in the summit recently held in Sharm al-Shaykh under the alleged banner of "peace-makers," because the hasty gathering was virtually not intended to pushing the Mideast peace process forward. It was only for giving Israel further support at the full expense of Arab rights, national interests and dignity. The summit was only to brand Israel as a victim of terrorism and violence which are precisely its own produce.

The policy of aggression and occupation should be bridled once and for all, and all forms of injustice and oppression must be eliminated. The international drive must be rational and should put things in the right and sound path. The chances for materializing the long-awaited just and comprehensive ME [Middle East] peace should be reconsidered before it is too late.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: UN Envoy Mestiri May End Afghanistan Mission

LD1703110196 Tehran IRNA in English 0826 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, March 17, IRNA — U.N. Special Envoy on Afghanistan, Mahmoud Mestiri, may give up his mission aimed at restoring peace to that country, said an Afghan Government source here Saturday [16 March].

Mestiri was expected here early this week to resume his activities, said the source, adding that the U.N. envoy may discontinue his mission due to sickness.

He lauded Mestiri's new idea that instead of power transfer, all groups in Afghanistan should join the present government. The source, who preferred to remain anonymous, regretted that Mestiri may not continue his mission and said this will be to the disadvantage of the Afghan people.

He stressed that political presence of the U.N. in Afghanistan is very essential at a time when talks between some Afghan groups and the government is nearing positive results.

During the past three and a half years, U.N. presented unacceptable and impractical plans based on an incorrect interpretation of the realities in that country. However, U.N.'s latest stand makes up for the past errors, he added.

Mestiri launched six rounds of activities to restore peace to Afghanistan but failed to gain considerable results due to unacceptability of his plans.

Afghanistan: Islamic Unity Party Head Praises Iran's Peace Efforts

LD1803094696 Tehran IRNA in English 0851 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 18, IRNA — Head of Afghan Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami (Islamic Unity Party), Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohammad Akbari here Sunday [17 March] appreciated Iran's efforts to restore peace and tranquility to Afghanistan.

In an interview with IRNA, he stated that establishment of unity between the two wings of his party as well as signing the peace accord between them were the successful achievements of Iran's efforts to restore peace to his country.

As for the situation of Shiite Muslims in Afghanistan, he stressed that like their compatriots, the Shiite community is also faced with shortage of foodstuffs and other difficulties.

He urged international community to increase its aids to Afghan people and help ease their sufferings.

Referring to intervention of a number of foreign countries in Afghan domestic affairs, Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbari reiterated that Afghan people believe that Pakistan with support of certain groups including the Taleban, is intervening in domestic affairs of their country.

Afghanistan: Army Artillery Responds to Taleban Shelling of Kabul

LD1503205796 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The army's artillery units responded last night to the firing of heavy weapons by the Taleban group.

Quoting an armed forces source, BAKHTAR reports that Benazir Bhutto's Taleban used heavy weapons to shell the Islamic Army's positions and residential areas of Kabul from the south. The army's artillery gunners then responded and shelled Taleban's concentration points and fortifications. No report is available on losses sustained by the Taleban group.

Fortunately, no loss of life as a result of the firing by the Taleban group has been reported, but four houses sustained some damage.

Afghanistan: Taleban Fires Rockets on Kabul

LD1603185996 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Five rockets landed on Kabul City yesterday evening.

BAKHTAR reported that yesterday evening, Benazir Bhutto's Taleban fired rockets on residential areas of Kabul City, as a result of which two children were wounded in the area of Naw Karta [south of Kabul]. A number of residences were also destroyed.

Afghanistan: Government Air Raid Kills 17 Taleban Troops

LD1703172996 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Kabul Administration [word indistinct] carried out an air raid on the positions of the Taleban group south of Kabul, killing 17 of them.

Two Pakistanis, 'Abdol Sattar and Mohammad Eshsan, were among those killed in the air raid.

Quoting the Afghan News Agency [ANA, based in Pakistan], Pakistani newspapers reported that the Pakistanis were engaged in fighting against Rabbani's administration and in support of the Taleban.

The government side also claimed that the Taleban suffered material damage and that at least 15 members of the group were killed, including two commanders.

Afghanistan: Electricity To Be Restored in Kabul

LD1603185596 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Electricity will be restored to Kabul citizens by the end of next week.

Mentioning this point to a BAKHTAR correspondent, Esteemed Engineer Mohammad Ayub, minister of water and electric power, said: Despite the continuation of the imposed war and massive damage to the transmission lines and network, electricity was restored last night in Kabul City. He added: Kabul citizens were without electricity as a result of damage to the electric power network. Since electricity is now reaching Kabul from the Mahipar hydroelectric power station, facilities have been created for engineers and experts to repair the electric power network. God willing, Kabul citizens (?as a whole) will have access to electricity by the end of next week. He added: When water levels in the Mahipar reservoir fall, electricity will be supplied to Kabul by Naghlo and Sarobi hydroelectric power stations [controlled by Golboddin Hekmatyar].

According to another report, the minister of water and electric power met the charge d'affaires of the Islamic Republic of Iran in his office this afternoon. Talks were held on Iranian assistance in repairing the electric power network. The Iranian charge d'affaires pledged cooperation in this respect.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: President Appeals for Consensus To End Political Crisis

BK1503165196 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1600 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] President Abdur Rahman Biswas has appealed to all political parties to show restraint and mutual accommodation in negotiations for resolving the current political crisis in the greater interest of the nation. The appeal was made in a statement issued in Dhaka today.

President Biswas called upon the opposition political parties to lift their hartals [general strikes] and noncooperation program and allow free movement of essential commodities, food, fertilizer, and (?diesel) to bring back normalcy in the civic life. He also asked the government to restore normalcy in all sectors. The president appealed to the countrymen, including professionals, businessmen, journalists, as well as social workers to contribute to uphold the rule of law, maintenance of social peace and stability, and continuation of economic activities without any disruption in the larger interest of the people and the country. President Biswas said at the request of the prime minister and leaders of various political parties, he invited leaders of all political parties to put forward their sincere views about how to overcome the crisis and requested them to exercise their prudence and tolerance. [passage omitted]

President Biswas said from thorough study of the Constitution and the opinions received from various legal experts, it appears that the president has his limitations. He said the Constitution is required to be amended to accommodate the provision for formation of a neutral caretaker government followed by a countrywide referendum. The president said national consensus cannot be reached on this. The concerned parties show no flexibility in their respective positions.

President Biswas said some political parties in response to his request submitted their opinions in writing on the framework and modalities of the proposed caretaker government. Some opposition parties have attached certain preconditions and some wanted preconditions to be met first. While appreciating their views on the issue, the president said that a presidential reference, as suggested by some of them, (?will be made) to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court to seek its opinion on the formation of a neutral caretaker government provided all the parties agree. He said the ruling party has accepted the main demands of the opposition for holding a fresh general election under a neutral caretaker government. The president said they have also offered to pass a bill on caretaker government in the very first session of the sixth parliament and hold general elections by May this year under the caretaker government. President Biswas said some political detenus [detainees] have been released as demanded by the opposition. He said what remains to be sorted out now is how to implement the formation of a caretaker government and said that everybody should respect and abide by the law of the land and the Constitution.

Bangladesh: 'Opposition Noncooperation Program' Continues

BK1503170196 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1600 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The countrywide opposition noncooperation program passed its seventh day today. A large number of autorickshas, minibuses, taxis, trucks, and private cars were seen plying in the main streets of the city. Shops located in major parts of the city were open. Police said the day passed without any major incidents exempting some bomb blasts at different parts of the city. Airport sources said all (?segments) domestic and international flights operated normally. [Words indistinct] terminal sources said almost all the launches left for different destinations and they arrived at the terminal. Railway sources said railway communications throughout the country were disrupted following obstruction by the opposition activists.

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party — BNP — and its front organizations held separate rallies protesting the ongoing noncooperation program of the opposition parties and urged the people to back the government in upholding the democratic and constitutional process. Labor and Manpower Minister Mir Shawkat Ali addressed a rally at Lalbagh area organized by the BNP Dhaka city unit. Opposition parties — the Awami League, Jatiya Party, and Jamaat-i-Islami — also brought out rallies for realization of their demands.

Bangladesh: Opposition Rejects President's Call To End Campaign

BK1603090196 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 0200 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In her reaction to the president's statement [appealing for withdrawal of opposition noncooperation movement], Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina, has said it has surprised and disappointed the countrymen. She said the noncooperation movement will continue.

In a press release, The Jatiya Party said that [words indistinct] the president's efforts would remain useful, but his statement has sidetracked the definite proposal of the opposition for solving the problem.

In its reaction, Jamaat-i-Islami said people felt that the president's initiative would succeed in ending the political crisis, but unfortunately the president has failed. They appealed to the people to continue the noncooperation movement with (?tolerance).

The Workers Party general secretary, Mr. Rashed Khan Memon, in his reaction said by virtue of his constitutional status and rights, the president can send any issue to the Supreme Court for judicial opinion, but there is no necessity for a consensus between the political parties in this regard.

Bangladesh: President Convenes Parliament Session

BK1603122396 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1200 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] By an order today, President Abdur Rahman Biswas has convened the parliament session at 1600 on 19 March at the Parliament House at Shere Bangla Nagar in Dhaka. This will be the first session of the sixth parliament. The newly elected members of the parliament who have not yet taken the oath will be sworn in on 18 March. Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali will conduct their swearing-in ceremony at the Parliament House at 1100.

Bangladesh: Zia Says Government Not To Impose State of Emergency

BK1703162796 Hong Kong AFP in English 1510 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA March 17 (AFP) — Bangladesh Prime Minister Khaleda Zia on Sunday said her government would not impose a "state of emergency" now, despite the opposition's continuing nationwide shutdown and widespread violence.

"At the moment we are not thinking of imposing (a state of) emergency," she was quoted as saying to a select group of local journalists by the official BSS news agency.

Zia, who is set to take new oath of office Monday as after her ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) won the February 15 elections, said the constitution would be amended to hold future elections under a "non-party" government in the first session of the new parliament.

The newly-elected sixth parliament goes into its first session on Tuesday.

After the passage of the bill, a referendum would take place as required by the constitution, to pave the way for new elections, Zia said.

The opposition boycotted the February elections to the 300-seat parliament. The polls were labelled as "seriously flawed" by independent observers.

Zia's promise came as troops remained on alert in Bangladesh's key port of Chittagong Sunday which remained shut due to lack of workers and security concerns by traders, officials there said.

"We are practically not operating and our information suggests it will remain so until the country returned to normal," said Mohsin Sarker, the port's director of traffic.

He said there had been only partial operations overnight, but only outside the main port, and then only oil trafficking and one grain deposit, which required no manpower.

Navy troops have taken up positions around the port after the government ordered them deployed Saturday to secure shipping operations amid the nationwide strike called by the opposition.

Port sources said 53 ships remained stranded. "There are 12,000 container cargos, mostly with materials for the major garment sector," one source said. The port normally handles 1,200 ships annually.

Chittagong's mayor and opposition Awami League leader Mohiuddin Chowdhury told AFP: "we will impose people's curfew around the port tomorrow...we will resist (goods movement) at any cost."

"It is impossible to make it operate" even if the military was called in and "we are not scared, but the government is using security forces to trample our democratic campaign," he added after a meeting with other opposition groups.

However, the shipping ministry said in a statement the port functioned normally on Sunday.

Port sources said Shipping Minister Shahjahan Siraj postponed a planned visit here Sunday to Monday, and 300 trucks belonging to government supporters have been ordered at the port to carry cargo under army escort.

But, 50 stevedores and clearing and forwarding agents, who manage the port's 10,500 workers were not cooperating, port sources said.

Nevertheless, some 200 day workers Sunday demonstrated outside the port urging resumption of operations.

In the capital Dhaka, an unidentified man was killed and 20 others injured Sunday as three bombs exploded inside a minibus near suburban Shaymoli area, police said.

Opposition activists stopped four minibuses in Dhaka's Mohakhali and Malibagh areas, asked the passengers to get out of the vehicles and then torched them, fire brigade sources said.

Seven others were killed in the political unrest over the past two days, including one in Chittagong during a gunbattle between government and opposition supporters, police said.

There have been more than 100 ppolitically-motivated killings during the two-year opposition anti-government campaign.

There was no immediate word from Bangladesh's business community who on Saturday delivered an ultimatum to the government to reopen the port, as well as land trading routes to India and cargo handling at the Dhaka International Airport in 24 hours or resign.

They also called on Zia to end a two-year political standoff with the opposition, which wants her to resign and hand over power to a neutral caretaker government that would organise fresh elections.

Bangladesh: Chittagong Port Remains Shut Amid Opposition Threats

BK1703122496 Hong Kong AFP in English 1205 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA, March 17 (AFP) — Troops remained on alert in the southern city of Chittagong on Sunday after being deployed to keep Bangladesh's key port open, as the opposition continued its campaign to oust Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

"We are practically not operating and our information suggests it will remain so until the country returns to normal," said Mohsin Sarker, the port's director of traffic.

He said there had been only partial operations overnight, but only outside the main port, and then only oil trafficking and one grain deposit, which required no manpower.

Navy troops have taken up positions around the port after the government ordered them deployed Saturday to secure shipping operations amid a nationwide strike called by the opposition in its campaign to oust Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

Port sources said 53 ships remained stranded. "There are 12,000 container cargos, mostly with imported materials for the major garment sector," one source said. The port normally handles 1,200 ships annually.

Chittagong's mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury, who is also an opposition Awami League leader, told AFP: "We will again reimpose people's curfew around the port if required...we will resist (goods movement) at any cost."

"It is impossible to make it operate" even if the military was called in, he added.

Meanwhile in capital Dhaka, an unidentified man was killed and 20 others injured Sunday as three bombs exploded inside a minibus near suburban Shaymoli area, police said.

The injured were being treated at the nearby government hospitals.

Opposition activists stopped four minibuses in Dhaka's Mohakhali (Eds: correct) and Malibagh areas, asked the passengers to get out of the vehicles and then torched them, fire brigade sources said.

Seven others have been killed political unrest over the past two days, including one person in Chittagong during a gun battle between government and opposition activists.

There have been more than 100 politically motivated killings during the two-year opposition anti-government campaign.

Port sources said Shipping Minister Shahjahan Siraj postponed a planned visit here Sunday to Monday, as 300 trucks belonging to government supporters have been ordered at the port to carry cargo under army escort.

But 50 stevedores and clearing and forwarding agents who manage the port's 10,500 workers were not cooperating, port sources said.

Nevertheless, some 200 day workers Sunday demonstrated outside the port urging a resumption of operations.

Quamrul Islam Chowdhury, general manager of the British-owned James Finlay plc, said his company, which represents Japanese NHK Shipping Lines, was forced to divert one ship carrying vehicles to Rangoon.

"We will not go to clear our cargo because nobody is going to give around-the-clock security," he said referring to last month's arson attack on his office.

At least two more freighters had left the port and many others were diverted to Burma, Singapore and Sri Lanka, officials said.

The Chittagong Feeder Trade Committee has threatened to boycott the port if the situation remains unchanged during the next 48 hours.

Officials said trucks could take out government cargo such as grain under army escort.

There was no immediate word from Bangladesh's business community who on Saturday delivered an ultimatum to the government to reopen the port, as well as open land trading routes to India and cargo handling at the Dhaka International Airport in 24 hours, or resign.

They also called on Zia to end a two-year political standoff with the opposition, which wants her to resign and hand over power to a neutral caretaker government that would organise fresh elections.

Bangladesh: Dhaka Radio Confirms Navy Deployment at Chittagong Port

BK1603160496 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The eighth day of the countrywide noncooperation program of major opposition parties passed off peacefully today. Vehicular traffic was almost absent in Dhaka, however, a few mini buses and double-decker buses were seen plying. Rickshas plied normally as in other days. Airport sources said that all international and domestic flights operated as usual. Ferry services also operated normally. However, railway communication throughout the country was disrupted due to blockade by opposition parties. Attendance at government and semigovernment offices was normal.

The government has deployed the Navy to assist the civil administration in ensuring the security of Chittagong Port and maintaining its normal operation. This was stated by Shahjahan Seraj, minister of state for shipping, at a high-level meeting in Dhaka today. The minister of state said that steps have also been taken to transport goods from Chittagong Port to capital Dhaka and other important places. He said that a deadlock has been created in the operation of the Chittagong Port as a result of the prevailing situation which led to almost suspension of import and export and the closure of various industries during the past few days. He said that the deadlock at Chittagong Port has adversely affected the country's overall economy. The minister said that five ships left the port and two ships docked today after work was resumed. Shahjahan Seraj called upon the leaders and the people of Chittagong as well as concerned [word indistinct] and shipping agents to cooperate in running the operation of Chittagong Port.

India

India: Spokesman Says NPT 'Flawed'

BK1503160596 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has made it clear that the continuous clandestine procurement of nuclear weapons material by Pakistan confirms the irrelevance of the nonproliferation treaty. A spokesman of the External Affairs said that the NPT [Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty], besides being discriminatory, is fundamentally flawed as it is ineffective in preventing Islamabad from smuggling in such material. The spokesman added that Pakistan is also clandestinely procuring ballistic missiles. New Delhi's concern over these developments have been brought to the attention of the United States on a number of occasions. It has also been conveyed to China and other countries.

India: New Delhi Formally Seeks Permanent UNSC Membership

BK1503161496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi has formally offered to take up responsibility as a permanent member of the UN Security Council. The external affairs minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, asserted that India eminently qualifies for the position and he had expressed at the United Nations India's readiness to shoulder the responsibility. In his keynote address read out in absentia at the launching of the Independent Working Group's report on the future of the UN in New Delhi today, Mr. Mukherjee said India supports expansion of both permanent and nonpermanent memberships. Equitable geographical distribution and the size of the economy and population should be used as criteria for selecting permanent members, he said.

India: Commentary Views Delhi's Security Council Aspiration

BK1603142796 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 16 Mar 96

[Commentary by Mahendra Ved]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] It is now more than a year that India began its campaign for being elected a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. Not really known for adopting aggressive postures in the international affairs, India has been canvassing its case in a quiet but concerted manner for a role that it feels it rightfully has in the comity of nations. External affairs minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, has announced that India has formally offered to take up this responsibility. Simultaneously, an independent working group that he addressed yesterday has ably articulated the Indian viewpoint almost like an election manifesto. It said that the Security Council be expanded with 23 new members. Not more than five of them should be permanent. All new members should be selected on the basis of their role in the UN peacekeeping operations, in environment protection, and other issues that reflect the true spirit of the UN Charter. Their veto power should be limited to these universal issues and not used for political and partisan purposes.

The membership issue has come up during virtually all high-level interactions that India has had with other nations in the recent months. There are but a few examples of the Indian campaign. The response from other governments has been by and large positive. But it is also mixed in that there is no outright support from everyone — it cannot be. The national interest, the regional concern and international perceptions differ from country to country, and even from government to government. Even though supportive, recognized the ground realities and the prevailing mood in the world arena. [sentence as heard]

Not that the Indian campaigners are oblivious of these. To be able to gain the widest possible acceptance, they will have to gain acceptance in the Asian region itself. This is because a permanent membership is being perceived as also representative of the vast region which has been kept out of the big league simply because it did not share the spoils of the victory of the second World War. The present permanent members remained glued to their past and at best they would now like to accommodate two of the prosperous losers — Germany and Japan — but no more.

Needless to say India would need to gain wide support from those who had kept their club an exclusive affair. (?India needs) to garner support of the Third World nations, especially of the Asian neighbors. A lot of India's friends in the distant land would like India to first emerge as [words indistinct] leader. A hostile Pakistan or some of the smaller neighbors who already perceive India as a big brother are not going to be easy to persuade.

India qualifies on the basis of the yardstick set by the independent group. None can dispute them, but noble intentions are not enough and there is a long way to go before India can achieve its goal.

India: Leaders Announce Merger of SJP, Samata Parties

BK1703065696 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Samajwadi Janata Party [SJP] and the Samata Party have merged. This was announced by the former prime minister and SJP leader, Mr. Chandrashekhar, and the Samata Party president, Mr. George Fernandes, at Rohtak, Harayana today.

Addressing a rally, they said they will contest the coming Lok Sabha polls under one symbol and the modalities of the merger and the name of the united party will be finalized soon. Mr. Fernandes also said that the Samata Party will have an alliance with the Manipur People's Party, the Mizoram Janata Dal, the Nagaland People's Party, and the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party for the elections.

India: Commission To Finalize Election Schedule 19 Mar

BK1603125196 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Election Commission will meet on Tuesday to finalize the schedule for the Lok Sabha elections and assembly polls in some states. The decision was taken at a full meeting of the commission presided over by the chief election commissioner, Mr. T.N. Seshan, in New Delhi today. The meeting was held to discuss issues relating to the coming elections. Earlier in the day, the chief election commissioner, Mr. Seshan, met the prime minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao.

India: Kashmiris Reject Chavan's Talks With 'Puppet' Leaders

BK1603111796 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Talks held in New Delhi yesterday between the Kashmiri puppet leaders and Indian Home Minister S.B. Chavan have been totally rejected by Kashmiris. They observed a total general strike across the occupied territory, calling the talks treason and a conspiracy. The strike call by the Jamaitul Mojahidin to demonstrate unity in opposing the talks by the nine renegades with India was responded to overwhelmingly by the Kashmiris fighting for the right to self-determination.

In Srinagar, Jamaitul Mojahidin has described the talks as a conspiracy by India and its hired agents against the people of Kashmir. Earlier, a news release from the Jamaitul Mojahedin in Srinagar had warned that Kashmiris will fight such conspiracies tooth and nail, and the sacrifices of over 50,000 martyrs will not be wasted. Kashmiri leaders said that the complete hartal [strike] across held-Kashmir highlighted the outright rejection of the so- called talks and demonstrated that Kashmiris want nothing short of self-determination.

Responding to the talks, a leader of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference said such talks are bound to prove a futile exercise and reiterated Hurriyat's offer of tripartite talks. He said no talks could be fruitful without the participation of Pakistan.

India: 'Self-Styled' Commander, 6 Militants Killed In Kashmir

BK1603121696 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, a self-styled divisional commander of a banned militant outfit has been killed when militants ambushed a police party at Bandipura. The militant, G.R. Lone alias Umer Chacha, had earlier been apprehended by police and the ambush took place when he was being taken to various places to recover arms from militant hideouts on his disclosure. Lone is believed to be responsible for over 100 killings of civilians and security force personnel.

Meanwhile, six militants were killed and a dozen arrested in the Kashmir Valley since last evening. Six militants surrendered along with their arms and ammunition before the security forces at Kupwara.

India: Islamabad Cites 'Freedom Fighters' Spokesman on Talks

BK1603131696 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In occupied Kashmir, freedom fighters spokesman in Srinagar today dismissed talks in New Delhi with four Kashmiri renegades as farcical, stressing that there were three parties to the Kashmir dispute, that is Pakistan, India and true representative of Kashmiri people, and any bilateral move was meaningless.

The spokesman pointed out that there was no use of even tripartite talks at the present moment because the present Indian Government had been left with only two months tenure which would come to an end with the holding of general elections. The show of talks, the spokesman added, was being staged only for using it by the ruling party in the general elections as a winning card. However, he added, this purpose could not be achieved by such a futile exercise as the Indian electorate was well aware that Kahsmiris involved in talks were just puppets and they had no influence whatsoever in occupied Kashmir. The people in occupied Kashmir reiterated their total rejections of these treacherous puppets with yesterday's crippling protest strike. The spokesman made it clear that Kashmir issue could be tackled only through substantive between Pakistan, India and genuine representatives of Kashmiris.

India: Kashmir Governor Says Militant Leaders Prepared for Talks

BK1703132396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Jammu and Kashmir governor says that more Kashmiri militant leaders are prepared for talks with the center to find a peaceful solution to the Kashmir tangle and for ensuring normalcy. In an interview to PTI in Jammu today, General Krishna Rao said militants have now realized that they cannot succeed in getting the so-called Azadi [freedom]. Most of them are being released following indications about their willingness for talks.

On the unprovoked firing by Pakistani troops along the international border and Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir, the governor said Islamabad is keeping the border active because of its frustration.

Iran

Iran: 'Text' of Khamene'i Statement on Majles Election

LD1503130096 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] After the announcement of the Fifth Majles election results, the Exalted Leader of the Islamic revolution, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, issued a statement concerning the spectacular participation of the heroic Iranian nation in the Fifth Majles elections. This is the text of the statement:

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful, now that with God's grace the great Iranian nation has carried out the first round of elections for the Fifth Islamic Consultative Majles with a grandeur and glory worthy of this brave and great nation, I deem it my duty to thank the wise and astute Almighty whose blessing and assistance led the people to what is their duty as well as their right — that is the election of representatives for legislation and other important duties — and made them succeed in that endeavor. I also thank sincerely the intelligent, aware and faithful people who, at this crucial juncture, like always, heeded the call of the revolution and, by understanding the importance of the elections, rushed to the polls and by their action surprised, infuriated and disappointed the enemies of the country and the ill-wishers of this nation. That is, at a time when ill-wishing and vindictive enemies of the Islamic Republic of Iran were trying, through their extensive and exorbitant propaganda, to render the people hopeless, indifference and pessimistic and to portray the great nationwide elections as futile and artificial by various lies and accusations, and thereby deprive the people of their tremendous right and make them neglect their crucial duty. Just at such a time the Iranian people, who are intelligent, prudent and know their enemy, manifested the greatest of the elections during the 17-year period after the victory of the revolution by their revolutionary action and on the holy Friday [8 March] defeated and pounded the enemy and taught another bitter lesson to the arrogant U.S. regime, international conspirators and the lowly and vindictive Zionists. God's blessings on this great nation.

I cry out and implore the Merciful and Bountiful God, beseeching him for divine blessing and guidance and for special favors of the Lord of the Age — may our souls be sacrificed for him.

I also deem it my duty to thank the honorable Interior Ministry which took on the heavy burden of carrying out the elections and carried it through in an exemplary manner; and also to thank the honorable Guardian Council which through its constant exhausting efforts and excellent performance supervised the proper, sound and robust implementation of the elections, to thank sincerely all the organs and organizations which undertook their crucial and decisive duties in the best possible manner. That cooperation and proper execution, which accompanies a trust for the election executive and supervisory officials, give me cause to be certain, with peace of mind, that, thanks be to God, the elections have been carried out in a sound manner and untainted and the futile propaganda efforts of the enemies to find fault with it have proved worthless.

Of course the officials are duty bound to investigate any complaints with utmost care and attention and if there has been any injustice in any corner of the country, rectify it.

Also relevant officials are duty bound to investigate meticulously reports indicating a lack of care in certain electoral campaign expenditures and if, God forbid, in introducing candidates some have stooped to indiscriminate spending of money and purloining from the public purse, take them to relevant authorities for prosecution and report the results to me.

I beseech God Almighty to bestow his blessings to you all.

[Signed] Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i

[Issued] 15 March 1996

Iran: Besharati—Turnout in 5th Majles Elections 80 Percent

LD1703082796 Tehran IRNA in English 0757 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 17, IRNA — Some 80 percent of eligible voters throughout the country cast votes in the elections for the Fifth Majlis, on March 8, said Interior Minister 'Ali Mohammad Besharati.

The morning English-language daily 'TEHRAN TIMES' Sunday quoted the interior minister as saying, "the first round of the Fifth Majlis elections nation-wide was very fruitful."

He also said that due to the role of the media, the elections had certain characteristics such as the safe-handling, close cooperation between the Interior Ministry and the Guardians Council, and broad partnership between the Information Ministry, the Armed Forces, the judiciary and all the responsible officials.

"Altogether, 24,700,000 votes were counted for the Fifth Majlis, whereas the count stands at 18,300,000 for past elections," he pointed out.

100 reporters from 70 countries visited Iran and found no shortcomings in the flow of elections, the minister underlined.

Iran: Islamic Revolution Mojahedin Welcome Defeat of 'Right Wing'

LD1503173996 Tehran SALAM in Persian
13 Mar 96 pp 1, 2

["Statement by the Mojahedin of the Islamic Revolution on the Defeat of Monopoly-Seekers in the Elections"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Mojahedin of the Islamic Revolution organization has congratulated the Muslim and revolutionary nation on the defeat of those who sought to monopolize elections to the fifth Majles. Their statement reads:

Your participation in the fifth Majles elections has begun a new chapter in the history of the revolution and the parliament. Your votes across the country have changed the composition of the Majles and turned the majority faction to a minority force. Of the 140 candidates who have entered the Majles only 41 were on the lists published by the official press of the traditional right wing. This figure, which is less than a third of the determined seats, indicates the defeat of the strategy which sought to give the traditional right a monopoly of power. The defeat is even more evident when we realize that only a handful of the candidates who are standing for the second round belong to the abovementioned faction.

Our organization congratulates the wise Muslim nation on this victory and we emphasize that the present achievements must be guarded vigilantly, particularly since the abovementioned faction is extremely angry about these results and has started extensive efforts to change them.

We call on all the people to guard the achievements of the current elections and we warn the honorable Guardian Council that the present election results, particularly those of Tehran, must be guarded and that the health and legitimacy of the elections must not be a target for the greed of a group which only seeks power.

We use this opportunity to invite all the people to have a wise and active presence in the second round of the elections in order to complete the victory and to form a powerful Majles where all Muslim and revolutionary forces are present.

We also thank all the individuals and groups who have given ceaseless and sincere support to the the "Coalition of the Groups Supporting the Line of the Imam" and call on them to extend their efforts in the second round of elections, which are even more important and determining for the forces which follow the line of the imam.

[Signed] The Organization of the Mojahedin of Islamic Revolution of Iran, 12 March 1996

Iran: AKHBAR Says Election HQ Disregarding Public Opinion

LD1503172996 Tehran AKHBAR in Persian
12 Mar 96 p2

[From the "Comment of the Day" column, entitled "The Election Headquarters and Its Disregard for Public Opinion"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Disregarding public opinion is the biggest danger threatening any organization, organ or body. The people with their extensive presence in the [8 March Majlis] election announced their trust and confidence in the organizers of the election. However, it seems that the country's election headquarters, untouched by this expression of trust and confidence, is acting in a way which is a blatant disregard for public opinion. The people these days are following the election results hour by hour and minute by minute. But unfortunately, the people were amazed and baffled that there was no update of election results in the radio's major news bulletin at 1400 [1030 GMT] yesterday. And following the unjustified silence of the election headquarters, the television's 1400 news bulletin, too, failed to announce any election results.

The minimum expectation from the election headquarters in this critical time is that it should inform the people through the radio and television of the latest election results in short intervals — at least hourly — which did take place during the previous Majlis election. Behaving in such a way is viewed by the people as a weakness and as disregarding their opinion and votes. The exalted leader has said that the ballot box is the people's honor held in trust and added the election organizers should count the votes properly.

Is the behavior of the country's election headquarters in line with this order of the exalted leader?

Disregarding public opinion raises questions such as what is going on behind the closed doors of the election headquarters? What is happening to the people's votes? Why are journalists being prevented from attending the news department of the Interior Ministry and election headquarters?

Iran: Rejected Candidates Write to Rafsanjani

LD1503220896 Tehran AKHBAR in Persian 13 Mar p 3

[Report by AKHBAR News Network: "Why Write a Letter to the President?"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A group of candidates whose eligibilities were rejected and who are known as the Line of the Imam forces, have sent a letter to Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the president, objecting to the decision of the executive and supervisory committees and the Guardian Council.

The full text of the this letter which was read by 'Ali Mohammad Gharibani, deputy for Ardebil, at the open session of the Majles yesterday [12 March], is as follows:

Respected President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Your Excellency Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani.

With respect and hopes of glory and victory for the Muslims and joy and happiness for the great Iranian nation: We are a group of the revolutionary offspring of the Islamic homeland who owe their political life to the Imam, the revolution, and the esteemed leader of the revolution. Our policy is: To support the interests of the deprived and the oppressed; to defend individual and social freedom as inscribed in the constitution; to struggle to increase and extend the principles and values of the Islamic revolution; and to rely on human compassion.

We put ourselves forward as candidates in accordance with our our revolutionary duty, commitment, political-social mission and also because we were invited to do so by of our country's senior officials. Unfortunately, we were deprived of the opportunity to stand as candidates because we were rejected by the executive supervisory board and by the Guardian Council. Not only have we not been given the opportunity to defend ourselves at all legitimately and legally, which is a basic human right, but we have also failed in our efforts to pursue the matter and obtain some information on the reason or reasons why we were not deemed to be eligible. From the legal point of view, Article 52 of the Majles Election Laws has a Note which accords those whose candidacies have been rejected the right to submit their objections — backed by their reasons — to the provincial supervisory board. This assumes that candidates have already been told why they have been rejected. Otherwise, how could candidates who do not know why they have been rejected back their objections with evidence? [passage omitted]

The rejection of Majles candidates, in accordance with a clause of Article 56, should be based on whatever the law has prescribed and on valid evidence and documents. Yet, no such legal and valid documents and evidence exist in the case of the offspring of the revolution. Since the decision of the Guardian Council regarding the eligibility of candidates was, by its nature, a judgement, then it [Guardian Council] should get on with investigating the eligibility of candidates on the basis of the principle of presumption of innocence [bara'at], which is a jurisprudential, Islamic, and legal principle, stressed in the constitution and in the common law. It should not issue its verdict from behind closed doors, without having explained the accusation and heard the defense.

Now — taking note of the unpleasant consequences of this kind of decisionmaking and the fact that some people's public reputation has been damaged and tarnished, that private and public freedoms have been further restricted and that the law has not been observed — we urge your excellency, who swore before the Iranian nation to uphold the constitution and defend public freedoms, to use your powers and resources to pave the way for informing the great Iranian nation about the accusations which have stripped these individuals of their public rights. And we urge you not to allow the scope of action of revolutionary and committed forces to be restricted on the basis of some imaginary pretexts, and not to allow accusations and possibly some biased thinking to become tools for pushing aside those who care for the revolution. Or, worse, that political taste should become the reason for the elimination of these forces.

Otherwise, such unfair actions and initiatives and such an unprincipled and illegal approach will open the way for shortcomings and greater problems. The consequences of such actions are the erosion of public trust and a reduction in the extent of people's participation which will, in turn, have destructive consequences that cannot be reversed by our sacred [Islamic] system.

[Signatories] Mohammad Rashidian: candidate from Abadan (former member of the Assembly of Experts and deputy in the first three Majles).

Engineer 'Ali Mohammad Gharibian: candidate from Ardebil (deputy in the Second, Third, Fourth Majles and head of at least five main committees and subcommittees).

'Abbas Duzduzani: candidate from Tehran (former minister of Islamic Guidance, former commander of the [Islamic Revolution] Guards Corps and deputy in First, Second, Third Majles and member of the Presidium of the Third Majles).
Hojjat ol-Eslam Hadi Ghaffari: candidate from Tabriz.
Engineer Abolhasan Ha'eri-Zadeh: candidate from Birjand and Nahbandan.
Latif Safari: candidate from Eslamabad-e Gharb (deputy in the first three Majles).
Engineer Hasan Mokhtari: candidate from Najafabad.
Ahmad Taha: candidate from Bukan (member of the executive board of the commission for labor and social affairs and deputy in the Third and Fourth Majles).
Dr. 'Ali Mohammad Ahmadi: candidate from Aligudarz.
Engineer Seyyed Hoseyn Qazizadeh-Hashemi: candidate from Fariman and Sarakhs.
Engineer Karim Malek Asa: candidate from Malavi.
Hojjat ol-Eslam Sa'idianfar: candidate from Khomeyni-Shahr (deputy in the Second and Third Majles)
Dr. Musavi-Shahrudi: candidate from Shahrud.
Ahmad Hakimipur: candidate from Zanjan.
Mohammad 'Ali Moqnian: candidate from Bijar (deputy in the Fourth Majles]
Ra'isi: candidate from Shahr-e Kord.
Mahmud Rabati: candidate from Shahryar.
Seyyed Mohammad Ha'eri: candidate from Dehloran.
Dr. Yadollah Eslami: candidate from Tehran.
Engineer Mohammad Reza Behzadian: candidate from Qa'enat.
Mohammad Baqer Baqeri-Nezhadianfard: candidate from Larestan.
Seyyed Mohsen Shafi'i: candidate from Dorud and Azna.
Mohammad Hoseyn Jahangiri: candidate from Kermanshah.
Engineer Nader Kavusi: candidate from Tuysirkan.
Qader Sharifzadeh: candidate from Sardasht.
Najafi: candidate from Barkhwar and Khwaf.
Qahreman Rahmani: candidate from Takestan (deputy in Third Majles).
Dr. Fazlollah Salavati: candidate from Esfahan (deputy in the First Majles and member of the education board and head of the college for languages; eight years of exile and imprisonment under the despotic monarchical regime because he was an Islamist).
Engineer Armin (member of the central council of the Mojahedin of the Islamic Revolution Organization).
'Ali Reza Adeli: candidate from Ardebil (former director general of prisons in Tehran Province).
'Ali Reza Yazdani: candidate from Ardebil (former director general of the financial affairs of Ardebil's governorate-general and 82 months on the fronts)
Rahim Malekasa: candidate from Dorud and Azna.

The names of the rest of the candidates of the Line of Imam forces who were rejected will be published at a later date.

'Ali Mohammad Gharibian, in his pre-agenda speech, thanked the people of Ardebil, adding: In spite of the adverse propaganda launched by provincial officials and the groundless, arbitrary rejection of my eligibility, which unjustly stripped me of my legal right to stand as a candidate, the inhabitants of Ardebil renewed their trust and cast over 140,000 votes in favor of their servant ('Ali Mohammad Gharibian).

Iran: Paper Criticizes Those Questioning Elections

LD1603171196 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 13 Mar 96 p 4

[Report by the JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI correspondent in Bushehr: "Spreading Rumors and Questioning the Elections Will Lead to Fulfillment of the Enemy's Strategic Aim"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The elections to the Fifth Majles in Bushehr Province were indescribably successful. Undoubtedly, this will be considered as a great defeat for the enemies of the Islamic Republic system.

In this round, the brave people of the province turned out extensively, and more than 90 percent of those eligible to vote did so for their desired candidates and without any worry. [passage omitted]

All in all, a fair and logical assessment of the Fifth Majles elections is that the people have come out of it proud and once more have proven that they are worthy of praise and have shown the greatness of Islam and Muslims to the whole world. As our late Imam [Khomeyni] said, elections are a divine test. [passage omitted]

Anyhow, the massive turnout in this round of elections, which came despite the poisonous propaganda by world arrogance, clearly demonstrated that the brave people of Islamic Iran — even in the farthest corners of the country — pay no heed to the propaganda bombardments of foreigners. Despite that political maturity one should not overlook the treachery and conspiracies of the enemies who try to show the depth of their anger towards the sacred system of the Islamic Republic with their hostile comments and vindictive statements. That is because the enemy will never give up its vicious and evil intentions. If yesterday they were trying to prevent the people's active participation in the elections by creating an adverse atmosphere, after seeing the extensive turnout, they still do not despair and will begin their fight against Islam and Muslims from another front.

Now the enemies of Islam are trying to put a question mark over the elections by spreading rumors and creating an atmosphere of pessimism. They are pretending that the elections were held in an unsound atmosphere and under the influence of certain individuals. Unfortunately some of those candidates who failed in the elections, and who consider themselves as the people's advocates and better than others, as well as their supporters, are providing grist for the enemies' mill and are assisting those who are trying to question the elections in the Islamic Republic system and sully the sanctities and beliefs of this brave nation.

Unfortunately, such rumors are heard more in one of the constituencies of the province where one of the clerics has succeeded in the first round. That is why, at this sensitive juncture, there is a need for vigilance by the people and officials more than ever in order to neutralize the conspiracies of the enemies of Islam. The reason is that questioning the vote of the majority of the people — who have gone to the polls only to fulfill their divine duty and to safeguard the sovereignty of Islam — is undoubtedly in line with the enemies' strategy. Moreover, putting a question mark over those officials, who for a month made life hell for themselves and toiled 24 hours a day so that these sound elections can be carried out in security and that the psychological war and the clamor of propaganda from the world arrogance can be confronted, is unfair and is the same as acting like unpaid mercenaries for foreigners.

That world arrogance is in serious contention with the Iranian nation and the glorious Islamic revolution and considers itself to be always in the vanguard of the front against Islam is in no doubt, but does one expect the friends of the revolution and those who consider themselves as part of this revolutionary nation to align themselves with the enemy and question the elections once they fail in the same? These elections, according to witnesses and in the eyes of the populace, have been rare, or rather, unprecedented in their execution, security, and the turnout at the provincial level.

Therefore, those who are confronting the people's vote today and try to mar the elections achieve nothing but their own disgrace.

Iran: President's Daughter's Political Popularity Assessed

LD1703174396 Tehran BAHMAN in Persian 6 Mar 96 p 3

[Unattributed article: "Fa'ezeh Rafsanjani's Popularity Due Partly to her Courage"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The name of Fa'ezeh Hashemi-Rafsanjani [daughter of Iranian President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani] is now being mentioned alongside the names of other successful candidates, and she tops the list of women candidates in the running.

More women have taken part in this round of elections than before, and it appears that women have also been more inclined to vote for women candidates than before. Women who are well-known and are talked about in society are encouraging other women to take part in voting.

The results of various surveys conducted so far by various centers indicate that people tend to favor her [Hashemi-Rafsanjani] because they believe that she courageously declares her opinions and viewpoints and adopts new and different policies towards issues that concern women.

Many women believe that any actions taken to improve the situation of women needs courage, and that Fa'ezeh Hashemi is indeed equipped with this important characteristic. The existence of such candidates strengthens the grounds for more participation on the part of women.

Iran: Paper Says Campaign Shows Breaking of Political Monoply

LD1703180396 Tehran BAHMAN in Persian 6 Mar 96 p 2

[Commentary by 'Ali-Reza Alavitabar: "Fifth Majles Elections and the Breaking of Monopoly;" from the "Editor's Note" column]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Whatever the results of the Fifth Majles Elections, one cannot deny that during the election campaign, the monopoly situation was broken and the tendency to monopolize power was dealt an irrevocable blow. Regardless of which current wins the elections and gains the majority in the Majles, the election campaigns in this term bring with them consequence which, on the whole, is auspicious for Iran's political scene. Of course, one should not close one's eyes to the bitterness of the rivalries and ignore the lessons they contain. But at the moment, our attention is focused on the positive consequences of the election campaigns, some of which we will review together.

1. The entry into the electoral arena by the "Servants [of Construction]" current and of other currents which differed from the Majles majority, as well as the presentation of alternative policies for the country broke the condition of monopoly. The monopolistic rule by one political faction had created an atmosphere in the country where you either had to align yourself with the majority current or leave the political arena. The imposition of a power monopoly had created an atmosphere which encouraged many to isolate themselves and depressed the political market. More often than not, it was thought that election results were obvious and the Majles majority group, with the resources at its disposal, would be able to completely determine the formation of the deputies. But the presence of competitors (whether new blood or veteran) shattered their assurance. The feelings of apathy and aversion to politics which had affected great sectors of the community were replaced with enthusiasm and joy. Alas, certain shortsightedness prevented the enthusiasm for participation in politics from permeating everywhere. How much longer will such lofty objectives and aspirations have to be sacrificed for the deficient understanding and short-term interests of some? Anyhow, the depression caused by the methods of some institutions during the Fourth Majles elections was broken by the active presence of political currents.

2. The country's political elite have come to a form of understanding that it is not in the interests of the country to have a Majles monopolized by a particular political current. Instead, the Majles must fully reflect the society and its effective tendencies and interests. Taking into account that none of the country's political currents have full control over the society at large, the Majles should not be controlled by any one political current. A balanced and poised Majles where every social stratum has a position of influence according to its social weight will bring about the conditions where dialogue will be advanced through logical and rational means. A Majles where society is properly presented will prepare the grounds for a national debate on future strategies and programs. The creation of a tendency toward a balanced and poised Majles was one of the excellent results of this election campaign.

3. The labor force is the most significant and also the most scarce capital of a country, and it is best to have an able and specialized labor force. Unfortunately, in our country the misuse of the labor force has become a chronic disease. With every change and development, some tested and able forces are omitted from the political and sometimes the executive arena, and the country is denied their services. From this point of view, the recent elections were satisfactory because some able and valuable figures who had been the victim of unkind and inappropriate treatment and who had been forced to the periphery of the political domain, have now returned to improve the quality and credibility of the country's political struggles. Here, the presence of some former ministers and Majles deputies was most evident.

4. Another event which must be recalled as an achievement of the Majles election campaigns is the position adopted by the Assembly of Experts and Ayatollah Ebrahim Amini [second speaker of the Assembly] regarding the elections. The presence of the clerics in rival currents and in the atmosphere of electoral competition, while leading to the flourishing of political activities, at times will cause their supervisory, guiding, and paternal role to be forgotten when they should be overseeing all the Muslim and revolutionary currents. The Assembly of Experts' statement was an effort to fill an empty gap. Instead of laying down specific and minor definitions and thus putting off some groups, the clerics can, and should, explain the yardsticks and, like an honorable father, put all under their protection. Moreover, people do not expect hot, mouth-filling slogans from the clergy, but deliberation, moderation, and carefulness. The Assembly of Experts' statement and Ayatollah Ebrahim Amini's interview were encouraging examples in this field.

The Islamic revolution and the system which emerged from it belong to all. The endeavor to participate in determining future policies is everyone's right. No one can deprive the people of that right and no one should give up exercising that right because of the monopolistic approach of some officials. Elections are an institution for exercising the people's right of sovereignty.

Iran: Paper Says Trade Associations Becoming Political

LD1703184196 Tehran BAHMAN in Persian 6 Mar 96 p 3

[Unattributed article: "Experts Have Become Political"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In this round of the elections, the number of candidates and political groups is more than in previous rounds. Of all the groups which have entered the political and election scenes one should name three important specialist groups. The Association of Building Companies, the Society of Consultant Engineers, and the Medical Association are three major specialist bodies which have announced their presence in the elections by putting forward candidates. That declaration of presence can also be seen at the universities. Certain groups have been formed at universities which, by announcing their lists of lecturers and academic specialists, have expressed their intention to enter politics. The growth of political tendencies among specialists and their organized and planned presence is an important phenomenon in the country's political scene. The activities of those groups are a sign of the gradual maturity of the Iranian society, and the outstanding characteristic of those groups, particularly the above- mentioned three specialist groups is evident in the modern form of their propaganda.

Iran: Official Tells AFP Iran Rejects U.S. Nuclear Weapon Charges

NC1703170596 Paris AFP in English
1631 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 17 (AFP) — Iran rejected on Sunday [17 March] the latest "absurd" charges from the United States that it was seeking nuclear weapons, but reserved its "right" to develop civilian nuclear technology.

Washington "has once again resorted to its old strategy of levelling totally absurd and irrelevant allegations against Iran," a senior foreign ministry official said in a statement received by AFP.

"Iran has scrupulously adhered to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and volunteered" to have its facilities checked by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), said the unnamed official.

A US disarmement chief, Thomas Graham, told the London-based Arabic daily AL-HAYAH on Sunday that his country was preparing to take "serious steps" against Iran to prevent it from developing nuclear weapons.

Washington, repeatedly accusing Iran of seeking to develop nuclear weapons and supporting international terrorism, has pushed to have the Islamic republic isolated. Iran has steadfastly denied both charges.

The Iranian official said, however, his country "reserves its inalienable right to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes."

Iran: Envoy to France Denies Iranian Involvement in Terrorism

BR1503152796 Paris LE FIGARO in French
15 Mar 96 p 2

[Unattributed report on letter from Iranian Ambassador Dr. Hamid Reza Asefi: "Letter From Iranian Ambassador"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Following the article by Mr. Henri Hajdenberg, president of the French Representative Council of Jewish Institutions entitled "Tehran — Terrorist Headquarters" (on LE FIGARO's opinion page of the 12 March edition), we have received a letter from Dr. Hamid Reza Asefi, ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, from which we are publishing the following excerpts.

"The author seeks above all to show that the development of relations between European countries and the Islamic Republic of Iran and the stances they adopt — including France's stance — are motivated solely by economic interests (...). It should be stated that the desire to develop such relations is motivated by very sound historical and cultural ties linking Iran and Europe, as well as by the independence of views and decisionmaking both sides enjoy with regard to various international issues, something which is much more important than the signature of a trade agreement or boosting the volume of our trade with other countries.

"Moreover, it is known that Iran, as an active and influential member of the international community, plays a major role in many worldwide and regional issues, including its contribution to peace in Tajikistan and the settlement of the conflict in Karabakh.

"(...) The author's assertion that Iran is the headquarters of Islamist movements opposed to Israel and moderate Arab countries is absurd. The Iranian authorities have denied these groundless, trite, and ineffectual accusations on several occasions. Here, one needs merely recall the priority which the Islamic Republic of Iran accords to the quality of its relations with Arab and Muslim countries. Today, these relations are very close.

"Mr. Hajdenberg then discusses the 'evidence' presented by Bill Clinton, who is trying to make people believe that Iran is implicated in some way. In actual fact, it is precisely the cogency of this lack of evidence that has led the Europeans to reject America's allegations. Where the United States is concerned, is not the author aware of the U.S. Congress decision to earmark a $20-million budget for subversive activities against Iran, a decision made in defiance of international law? Surely that is a flagrant example of state-sponsored terrorism."

Iran: Tehran Cites AFP on 'Continued Unrest' in Bahrain

NC1603140096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian
0430 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] expressed apprehension during yesterday's session toward the continued unrest in Bahrain. According to AFP, in the statement by the GCC secretary general, it was said that the GCC supports the government of Bahrain and will assist Manama in adopting measures for terminating the unrest.

In the past few months, Bahrain has been the scene for demonstrations and unrest.

Iran: Commentary Discusses Security Situation in Bahrain

LD1603180796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 16 Mar 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] On Friday March 15, Bahraini opponents announced that the country's security forces have rounded up over 400 people, among them some children. The new round of arrests are taking place after two restaurants were stormed by unidentified men last Wednesday and Thursday. During one of the raids seven people were killed. Though the government has so far voiced no official opinion, opposers have condemned the attack. They have called on the government to form an impartial research commission with foreign observers in order to identify those responsible for the events. It seems that the plan has been drawn up in line with the opposition's claim that the Bahraini Government's security services themselves launched the attacks in a bid to absorb [as heard] foreign support.

This comes at a time when since the beginning of the bombings in this little shaykhdom of the Persian Gulf in mid-January, the Manama government has constantly been holding the opposing elements responsible for the attacks. Under this pretext the police have, to date, rounded up hundreds of people. This is why earlier, according to some international and opposition organizations, over 2,000 people of the 550,000 population were arrested. The organizations had also expressed concern over tortures carried out in the country's prisons in their reports.

Meanwhile the success of Manama government's iron fist policy, which began with the start of the bombings, is facing great ambiguity. At that time, following a series of bombings and arsons in Bahrain, which were carried out by the opposition, a foreign propaganda wave surged up in support for the government. A great many Arab governments, as well as the U.S., endorsed the crackdown imposed on the people in Bahrain. But now that nearly two months have passed since an intensification of violence by the security forces targeting the masses, it doesn't seem that people have been despaired in their hopes for political freedom and opening of the parliament. The Persian Gulf Cooperation Council declared support for that government on March 15 takes place to the same end. [sentence as heard]

[Word indistinct] Bahrain's problem is rooted in political, social, and economic issues, experts do not expect that foreign support for the Bahraini Government could be much help to the country. The political experts maintain that the Bahraini people's 15-month long perseverance to attain their goals is something which the government of Manama should earnestly take into account.

Iran: TEHRAN TIMES on German Arrest Warrant for Fallahian

LD1603104296 Tehran IRNA in English 0926 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 16, IRNA — The English daily 'TEHRAN TIMES' reacted strongly to the the issuance on Friday by the German federal prosecutor's office of an arrest warrant for Iranian Information Minister Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Fallahian.

"The Israeli influence on the court's procedure is clear to everyone. After the Sharm al-Shaykh summit failed to fulfil the desires of the Zionist regime, the court issued the warrant, indicating that the Zionists and certain circles in the U.S., which have a proven animosity against the improvement of Tehran-Bonn relations, are again at work," it underlined.

It deplored the court's handling of the case, which it said has been changed into "a platform for the political trial of a country" and pointed to the unusual manner with which the court has allowed the issue to drag on for several years.

Questioning the competency of the court in dealing with the case it noted that all witnesses are members of anti-Iran terrorist groups masquerading as political groups harbored by the West.

Warning that there is a limit to everything, the article called on the German Government to check the "shameless act of the court and stop its nonsensical treatment as soon as possible if it was eager to maintain cordial relations with Iran."

"German officials should bear in mind that Iran is not dependent on any country," it advised, recalling that while the U.S. used to be Iran's main ally and chief trading partner, the Yankees were kicked out when they became arrogant.

"Iranians will not compromise their national pride," TEHRAN TIMES stressed, underscoring, "we did not do so during the difficult years of the Iraqi-imposed war and we will not do so in peace time."

Iran: Commentary on German Arrest Warrant for Iranian Minister

LD1703132696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The Iranian Foreign Ministry has condemned the German public prosecutor's decision over issuing an arrest warrant for the Iranian Information Minister 'Ali Fallahian, describing such a measure a contradiction of international norms and conventions.

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Mahmud Mohammadi, rejecting all allegations which had brought up the issuance of such a verdict, stressed that there is no shred of evidence linking Iranian officials with the case brought forth in Berlin's court. He stipulated that beyond doubt, a speeding up of a fair review of the case, would bring the facts to light and dispel all the unfounded allegations levelled against Iranian officials. [passage omitted]

Undoubtedly, the measure taken by Germany in trying the officials of another country is unprecedented and, based on the judicial system in many countries including Germany, in case the complaint has fought against a government, the order is invalidated.

Political experts maintain, with the German judicial system's performance on March 16th, the German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel can only step up U.S. efforts to isolate Iran.

Mr. Kinkel, in an interview with a Cologne-based daily COLOGNE EXPRESS, stated that should Iran fail to clarify her stance in view of terrorism to the European Union, there would be no need to reconsider any sort of talks with Tehran. Earlier Iran had, on various occasions, announced its decisive stance toward terrorism. However, about the German officials' posturings and decisions over Iran, one can only say that they have been swayed by international propaganda and pressures exerted by opposing groups and factions.

These negative forces have done all they could to disrupt the constructive relations the two countries enjoyed — what has actually contributed to the German public prosecutor's decision.

It is essential that the German Government prove the baselessness of accusations levelled against Iran to head off any strain in Tehran-Bonn relations.

Iran: Sharm al-Shaykh 'Source of Shame' for Participants

NC1603180296 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 10 Mar 96 p 14

[Political commentary: "The Supporters of Terrorism in a Vortex"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Following the recent bomb explosions in occupied Palestine, which killed at least 60 Zionists, Egyptian President Husni Mubarak and U.S. President Bill Clinton invited officials from Europe and the Arab Middle East to discuss what it calls "terrorism" at a session in Egypt.

Fifteen heads of state will attend this session, including King Husayn of Jordan, Russian President Boris Yeltsin, French President Jacques Chirac, Italian President Luigi Scalfaro, the Zionist regime's Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, Yasir 'Arafat, the head of the Palestinian Authority, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, and British Prime Minister John Major.

It was clear from the outset that at the Sharm al-Shaykh session the United States and its allies would initiate a new chapter in their efforts to exert pressure on the Islamic Republic of Iran as well as on the governments, such as those of Syria and Lebanon, which are resisting the plans of the United States and the Zionist regime.

The fact is that those who are posing as the pioneers in combating terrorism are in fact the agents of the unfavorable phenomenon of terrorism itself in this century. Hence the recognized international norms and legal commitments of intergovernmental relations, and those between the governments and the people, are violated by the ones who formulate these very laws. This is the affliction that has been tormenting the contemporary world for over half a century.

The Americans are calling for and organizing a so-called anti-terrorism session at Sharm al-Shaykh when the ink has not even dried on the bill allocating $20 million to intensify the "White House's government-sponsored terrorism" against the government and people of Iran. The international mass media are still carrying condemnation and a deluge of reports castigating this U.S. action, which is a precise example of the terroristic nature of the American Administration.

For years, the United States has been capitalizing on terrorism, abduction, the imposing of wars, and instigating flash points and crises in various parts of the world while calling itself a "vanguard of the struggle against terrorism." Israel's very existence is based on terrorism, plunder, and the genocide and annihilation of the Palestinian nation, which it continues to perpetuate, but uses the term of "a victim of terrorism" for itself.

We live in a world in which terms have become far removed from their actual meaning. In contemporary political vocabulary, concepts such as terrorism, human rights, democracy, stability, law, peace, and freedom are never used in their correct sense. The real terrorists are projected as the victims of terrorism while the victims are depicted as the terrorists. It is not very clear on what path these powers—which have developed this vocabulary—are steering the caravan of humanity.

The Sharm al-Shaykh session is being convened in the wake of four bombing incidents between the dates of 25 February and 4 March in occupied Palestine in which at least 60 Zionists were killed. All the leaders who are participating intend to denounce and condemn these explosions. However, when Yahya Ayyash and Fathi al-Shaqaqi were slaughtered by Israel's murderous agents and the terroristic Israeli Government audaciously assumed responsibility for these crimes, and when the Israeli aerial and artillery attacks are carried out daily against the villages in south Lebanon, these incidents are casually eliminated from the pages of international newspapers as a routine and repetitive phenomenon.

Every day a number of unknown Lebanese civilians are killed in this manner and when the inhuman Israeli soldiers break the bones of the Palestinians' limbs in the most brutal and savage manner, total news censorship is imposed. How is it that the voices of each of these governments who make lofty claims, which are also traitors to their own people, are not raised then? Why is it that government-sponsored terrorism is not considered a crime, but a response to that terrorism is labeled terrorism? Are these deceitful interpretations of political terms not an insult to the intelligence of mankind in today's so—called civilized world?

We believe that terrorism is a political attribute for defining the nature of a government which — in the aftermath of the Cold War — sees the world as a morsel to be swallowed. In order to attain this ill-fated objective, it begins a multipronged assault on political, cultural, military, and other fronts and seeks to extend its domination all over the world. The name of this repulsive assault is "the new world order."

More than any other government in the world, the Americans harp on support for democracy and human rights, but they themselves have the blackest dossier in the world regarding adherence to these rights.

Today the footprints of the Americans can be seen in most of the atrocities, military aggression against borders of other countries, government-sponsored terrorism, and in absolute violations of internationally-recognized laws in crisis areas around the world. The Middle East, East Asia, Central America, and South Africa are precise examples of the recurrent U.S. militaristic brutality and government-sponsored terrorism in the past decade.

None of the above have ever been deemed terrorism or human rights violations from the Americans' perspective. This is because the actual meaning of these terms is vastly different from their concept of terrorism. It is definitely for this purpose that the White House has begun efforts to topple the Islamic Republic of Iran, in order to persuade the Islamic Republic of Iran to temper its anti-American stances with what the White House terms "democracy."

The United States seeks to assist those opposed to Iran's system—which is a blatant and brazen example of "government-sponsored terrorism" in itself—and allocates budgets for such activities. Participation in the Sharm al-Shaykh session will not only be a source of shame [sharm] for the Arab shaykhs but also for all the attending heads of government.

Iran: Sharm al-Shaykh Summit Held To Divert World Opinion

LD1503134996 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 12 Mar 96 p 2

[Unattributed article]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Some 20 world leaders are to attend the anti-terrorism summit to be held tomorrow at Egypt's Red Sea resort of Sharm al—Shaykh.

The hurriedly organized summit has several aspects to be reviewed.

A — To select Sharm al-Shaykh as the venue of the summit itself is pre-planned ammunition for Israeli publicity and propaganda.

Sharm al-Shaykh is the same resort which was occupied by Israel in the 1967 war, but was returned to Cairo following the 1979 agreement. This was the first time an Arab country, Egypt, signed an agreement with Israel.

In Sharm al-Shaykh, Israel will once more find itself with its Arab neighbours and would very much like to send a message to the world that it has no eyes on the territory of others.

The fact is that Israel is dying to usurp the territory of others in order to translate its ambition for a greater Israel into reality. This is the reason why United Nations Resolutions Nos. 242, 338 and 425 are still to be addressed by Israel, which has continued to keep the world body's verdicts in cold storage.

B — Two persons suffered a great deal following a series of bomb blasts in Tel Aviv and other parts of Israel. They are Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres.

'Arafat is under fire from both opponents and friends for his faulty rule, while Peres, facing an election year, has lost his popularity in favour of his rival, Likud Leader Binyamin Netanyahu.

The Sharm al-Shaykh summit will serve 'Arafat and Peres as an injection of political tonic to regain lost strength.

C — The United States and Israel shaped a common strategy directed against Iran through baseless allegations that the Islamic Republic supports terrorism. Though the fact is that, compared to Iran, Saudi Arabia and Syria have closer ties with Hamas.

Israel did not point a finger towards Syria because it is holding the so-called peace negotiations with Damascus and Saudi Arabia is the frontline satellite state of America.

D — And America? Washington has made huge political and prestigious investment in the Middle East peace process which is defective, unjust and partial. To polish its image, the United States is pointing a gun toward a country which is not involved in the peace process, i.e. Iran.

This is one of the reasons why Europe has not paid serious attention to the claim of the United States and Israel. Europe never attaches much importance to the statements and policies of the presidents of the United States in election years.

Anyway, Sharm al-Shaykh will be used by Israel and the U.S. as an avenue for diverting world public opinion from the fact — a fact which condemns terrorism in any form and anywhere.

Iran: Journal Calls For Tehran To Host Summit on Terrorism

LD1503134196 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 13 Mar 96 P 2

[Editorial article]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The 19th Century saw an end to one global menace — sea piracy. Pirates disappeared from sea routes through popular international will which was successfully implemented through world public opinion.

International terrorism and terror tactics are very much alive in our world today and lots of discussions are held about these with no satisfactory result. Why?

Because of a lack of the same international will which made our waterways safe.

The biggest and most serious hurdle in the way of wiping out terrorism is a negative attitude which believes in fighting only a certain brand of terrorism, also known as "selective terrorism."

For example, we can easily refer to the United States' attitude towards freedom fighters in Latin America. We all know a number of Latin American freedom fighters had to sacrifice their lives through infamous CIA engineered plots.

The same dirty game is still being played by the United States in different parts of the world. The same United States, based on an article of a news agency, made a hue and cry and alleged that the Islamic Republic was behind a series of bomb blasts. The same American [as published] rolled out the red carpet for the reception of Gerry Adams, leader of the IRA [Irish Republican Army] which publicly claimed responsibility for the massacres of many innocent civilians.

The same America is not ready to support the just struggle of the Palestinians for their genuine rights.

We believe that a world leaders' summit should be called to explore the possibilities for creating a genuine and sincere international will to get rid of terrorism once and for all.

Before we plan a world summit, we must draw a clear line between terrorism and the struggle for the liberation of one's homeland. We should also pay due attention to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of a country which should not be damaged by any excuse, whatever it may be.

We would like to draw the attention of the government of the Islamic Revolution to consider the concept of a world leaders' summit across the globe through its political missions.

On the basis of the essential philosophy of the Islamic Revolution and its ancient historical background, Iran should offer Tehran as a venue for a world leaders' meeting in the near future. Through such a sound humanitarian move Iran would be able to materialize the aspiration of Iqbal, the poet of the East, who once predicted that Tehran one day would be the Geneva of the East.

We hope that the world leaders, brushing aside any biased attitude, will support the call of Iran and invest all possible efforts in eradicating terrorism from the globe once and for all.

Iran: Motherland-True Path Coalition in Turkey Said Bound To 'Fail'

NC1803090396 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 9 Mar 96 p 14

[Political commentary: "Turkey and an Unendurable Coalition"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A coalition government in Turkey, with a final agreement between Mesut Yilmaz and Tansu Ciller, the leaders of the Motherland Party and the True Path Party, is official. Yilmaz has presented his coalition government to President Suleyman Demirel. The coalition list has been submitted to the Turkish Parliament for a vote of confidence. Parliament will convene on Tuesday [12 March] to assess the credentials of the ministers- designate.

Thus the plan formulated initially by Turkish laicist groups for eliminating the Islamist Welfare Party is approaching its final stages. But the plan will fail and the Welfare Party will continue to represent a vast sector of Turkey's Muslim society. As the largest and strongest political party in parliament it will remain a major factor in neutralizing the laicist roles and programs of the coalition government.

In the past 13 years the influence of the Motherland Party and the True Path Party has been waning. Even now they can be considered to be among the weaker parties. Accordingly, they had to form a shaky coalition with the support of the various laicist parties, including the leftist, pro-Western, and capitalist parties, to prevent the Welfare Party from attaining power.

Such a conglomeration of heterogeneous and diverse elements in the Turkish cabinet will worsen the vast amount of social, political, and economic problems that remain unsolved in Turkey. Overt collusion among the heterogeneous laicist factions aimed at undermining the Muslims is unprecedented in Turkey and violates the alleged democracy and freedom that have been touted with such fanfare.

The new Turkish cabinet comprises 33 ministers, 17 of whom hold various portfolios. Nine cabinet members are from the True Path Party and eight are members of the Motherland Party.

The new cabinet in Turkey has 16 ministers of state, and chief ministers of various government departments and institutions have been appointed. Eight of the ministers of state are from the True Path Party while the other eight are from the Motherland Party. In the five-year term of the coalition government, according to the agreements reached, Yilmaz will be prime minister until the end of this year, Ciller in the second and third years, and Yilmaz in the fourth year. In the fifth year a representative of the True Path Party will be chosen with the concurrence of the two sides.

The coalition government in Turkey will not be a durable one. True Path and Motherland, which have held the reins of government, each in its turn, since 1362 [year beginning 21 March 1983], have been unable to forge a durable union with one another. The multiplicity of this government's problems will increase, because now the opposition in parliament is much stronger and will be endowed with even greater strength to thwart the government's plans and actions.

Iran: EU's Palermo Statement on Uprooting Terrorism Praised

LD1603144796 Tehran IRAN in Persian 11 Mar 96 p 1

[Editorial article]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The American Democratic Party and its Israel—loving secretary of state once again left the stage of the latest political show feeling dejected and empty-handed. The foreign ministers of the European Union [EU] member states did not agree to unjustly condemn Iran and other countries merely because Israel and America wanted them to. [passage omitted] The outcome of the Palermo session was a statement by EU ministers demanding the "condemnation of terrorism," regardless of who is committing terrorist acts and for what aim. This demand by the Europeans takes into account the interests of all real victims of terrorism, including the Islamic Republic of Iran. Iranian officials have repeatedly emphasized this point in various international forums and have in fact led the way in this campaign, and they will continue to do so. [passage omitted]

The Palermo statement envisages the continuation of talks and consultations between the EU and the Islamic Republic of Iran, aimed at "developing relations and creating a consensus" on ways of resolving the present problems in international relations.

The session's decision to send a high-ranking European delegation to Iran and a number of other countries for talks on the positions and viewpoints of the two sides on various international issues, notably the process of Arab-Israeli compromise, is a good opportunity for Iran to insist on its principled stances. These are stances which emphasize the importance of eliminating international terrorism, lending support to the people of Palestine, and putting an end to the intense injustice to which they are being subjected.

More than ever before, these talks can prepare the grounds for even closer cooperation between Iran and the EU in the field of initiating a campaign against terrorism and formulating a joint plan for uprooting this phenomenon. This indeed is what Iran has repeatedly called for.

Iran: Commentary Views Zionist Terrorism, Muslim Answer

LD1603133696 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 11 Mar 96 p3

[Article by correspondent A. Salaheddin: "Terrorism, Terrorism..."]

[FBIS Translated Text] A scene from the silent era films, which I used to see in my childhood, has stuck in my mind... A thick-set armed gangster enters a small town, gathers the people in a square, and opens fire on them... He kills dozens, wound dozens more, but there is no sound from any of the victims... That is because that was the era of the silent film...

Following the carnage, the gangster would utter a cry (albeit silent) which meant: "Murderers! I'll kill the lot of you!" What has been carried out in occupied Palestine by Zionist regime gangsters bears a strange resemblance to those unreal scenes.

Zionist gangsters, just like those the silent film scenes, came to Palestine and took it by force, money, and the power of the gun. They killed tens, hundreds of thousands of innocent and defenseless Palestinians. But the world, watching the scenes, did not want to hear the cries of those innocent ones. Now, after all the massacres, why shouldn't those murderers want to shout: "Murderers! We'll kill you all"! Why shouldn't those who are the clearest manifestation of terrorism, accuse the people who seek to exercise their most natural rights of "terrorism?!"

The Zionist security forces say to themselves: "A person who attached explosives to his body wanted to enter a supermarket in Tel Aviv. But when he failed to do that, he got himself to a crowded bus stop and... "

The television and other media showed still pictures and film of the incident to the whole world; pictures of the bodies of several young children and...the desperate cries of the innocent Zionists(!) was reaching the skies in all their media. Did those media shed any tears for the Palestinian children who have been burning in fire for more than half a century; for the torn-apart bodies of those who have been destroyed by the murderous Zionists' aerial bombardments and missiles? Anyhow, we must find out how true those pictures and films are. What proof is there to show that the pictures are not of the victims of the Zionists themselves? After all, during the Iraq-U.S. war, horrific film footage was shown, some of which later turned out to be made up from old and forgotten footage of 10 to 20 years earlier.

However, Muslim beliefs do not allow them to commit atrocities.... Any Muslim who acts contrary to his religion is a sinner and is condemned. Can the Zionists speak of such a criterion? They cannot! That is because, in their misleading Torah they are explicitly commanded: "Kill their men, women, and children; kill even their cattle and sheep; burn their farmlands and destroy their abode!"

The Zionists consider themselves, and only themselves, to be "the superior beings," the "superior race"...who have suffered unparalleled atrocities for centuries at the hands of the Christians. But they have always taken that as the "Test by Yahweh" and have said: "The God of Israelites is testing the Israelites... We must show our racial superiority!"

Centuries later, Adolf Hitler turned that same "Jewish racialism" around and said: "We, the Germans, are the superior beings, the superior race; but not all the Germans; only the Nordic ones (from the north)! And the Jews are the harmful race...they must be eliminated. All other ethnic groups and races are mediocre ones, ones which can only be useful under the guidance and leadership of the superior race. Moreover, these will become servants of the harmful race."

We can see that in fact the process of thought of the Zionists and Hitler is the same in the spirit and content viewpoint of the issue; only in practice have the particulars of the "subjects" changed. Today the Zionists have acquired all the paraphernalia of money and power, with the aid of American imperialism, and have created such a storm of terrorism in the world that the innocent cannot cry out. On the contrary, any terrorism which is carried out on the instigations of the Zionists and American imperialism is allowed, any atrocity is allowed, since in order to preserve the "superior beings and race" others must be sacrificed!! Today, in that same arena and killing field of tens of thousands of innocent and defenseless Palestinians and Middle Easterners, a conference is being convened by their murderers and the [murderers'] mercenaries for the prevention of terrorism. And of course, more than at any other time they will try on that day to brainwash world public opinion so that no one can resist the merchants of death.

But no! The Palestinians, who for three generations have seen nothing but treachery, atrocity, captivity, fear, tears, and super-modern weapons of the enemy, will continue their struggle to defend humanity, and will continue to demonstrate that if there is no possibility of life with honor and freedom, there is the great possibility of honorable death on the path to that life.

Those who in their palaces by the side of the Nile seek to continue their Pharaonic rule by convening the conference, had better realize that, while there are Pharaohs, there will be "Moseses." That is the law of existence. That is why it is better than instead of suppressing the innocent Muslim Palestinians, they should bear in mind the thought that, for the combatant Muslim who has stood up to this gross atrocity for more than half a century, there is no other more powerful and effective weapon than being a "faithful being."

We Muslims are the bearers of the banner of human freedom. There is no doubt that free human beings have no fear of the accusation of terrorism leveled at them by international terrorists.

Iran: Jannati Gives Friday Prayers Sermon

LD1503163596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran Provincial Network in Persian
0820 GMT 15 Mar 96

[Friday prayers second sermon delivered in Tehran by Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, member and spokesman of the Guardian Council — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] There are a number of current issues. One of them is the elections. Thank God [it went well] and we are very grateful to all the people who were somehow involved in the elections. [passage omitted]

The counting of the votes was so difficult. I went to watch it for myself. They were working with computers but it was tiring just watching them work. The Majles must reform the [election] law before the end of its term. This law has been a source of so much trouble for us. Of course, the problem was not limited to this term of the Majles. We had difficulties with the previous terms, and although there were some reforms, the law is incomplete. It allows anyone to come along and register as a candidate without any difficulty. There is not even a registration fee. Well, you might say, what is wrong with that? Why shouldn't everyone be able to register as a candidate for the Fifth Majles elections? Well, after they are accepted, they show off and say they have been approved by the Guardian Council for the Majles. And there are also other consequences.

This chaotic state of affairs is not right. It is not right to allow anyone and everyone to participate and cause so much work. Why should the administrators and supervisors have to count so many votes? In Tehran, there were 400 people counting and adding up the votes. It is not easy at all and may God bless them all.

I proposed to our colleagues and I also announce it here: There should be a law requiring a substantial deposit for registration. If they receive a certain percentage of the vote, even if they fail to enter the Majles, the deposit would returned. But if they receive only, say, 100, 500, or 1,000 votes in a city like Tehran where there are more than two million votes they would lose their deposit which would be confiscated by the government. There should be some measure to control the situation. That is why votes have been divided so much. Why should it be so? If there had been fewer candidates the number of votes would have been accurate and easy to handle. The votes were divided between so many people. It is really wrong. I hope the Majles does one more service and reforms the election law, in one form or another, before the end of its term.

Investigations into complaints [regarding the Majles election results] will start today. People had until yesterday to lodge their complaints and in various cities they did that; a few complaints were made here in Tehran. There is nothing wrong with this. Investigations into the complaints will start today or tomorrow.

There have been many complaints, and some may not be valid at all. Some may be valid, but if they do not affect the outcome of the election result in the end — for example, fewer or slightly more votes here and there — this is not important either. Imagine if someone received, for example, 300,000 votes and after a complaint and investigation we found that the actual number of votes received was 300,004. Nothing has really changed. The important issue is when a complaint affects the outcome of the election result, when it becomes clear that someone got more votes than possible, then that candidate must be eliminated. He would not even be allowed to enter the second round.

Those who have gone through to the second round could be eliminated all together as a result of investigations into complaints. For those who went through and were elected in the first round, if complaints show that the number votes received was not correct and that the elections were not held in a sound manner, even they may face difficulties following investigations. We may find that, in fact, they have come second.

It is natural that certain problems may occur. And they must be investigated. Someone who feels that his rights have been trampled on comes along and says, for example: My rival received many of my votes, there has been fraud, people voted with more than one identity card, they fooled illiterate people into voting for them, and so on. Such complaints must definitely be investigated. We hope we shall finish investigations into the complaints and have the new Majles sitting by around the beginning of Khordad [corresponding to middle of May]. [passage omitted]

Another topical issue which I wish to address is this American puppet show, this baring of teeth and squaring up, with the Americans taking the Israelis here and there or the Israelis taking them here and there. You know what I am talking about, these comings and goings to various summits, inviting people, and so on. I have a couple of things to say about this issue, one to the enemies and the other to friends.

Let me say this to our enemies: This hue and cry that you started, talking about supporting terrorists, why don't you come and answer this: When the Americans burned 70 people alive in America, what was this called? [sentence as heard] Can anyone deny it? Was it not the U.S. Government that burned those 70 people? This is just one example. They burned them alive, those who were opposed to them. What is this? Is this not called terrorism?

Israel, which kidnapped so many people, killed Yahya Ayyash by blowing his brains to bits; they eliminated [Fathi] al-Shaqaqi in that way. What are these actions called? Do you doubt that Israel does this? Do you doubt that this is terrorism? Where is the doubt?

You don't say anything about these incidents. But if we come along and say about the man who killed Yitzhaq Rabin something like: This was the hand of divine retribution by which Rabin got what he deserved, we become supporters of terrorism. You ask why we are happy because Yitzhaq Rabin was killed! Our crime was that we were happy because Rabin was killed. And we become supporters of terrorism! But they themselves, who commit acts of terror, are neither terrorists nor backers of terrorists.

Let this pass. This hue and cry that they started, they themselves know that they are tricking the people. This is demagogy. And they are dragging with them a number of weak governments which are treading on banana skins and thinking if they stand up to them even a little bit, they will fall over. The weak governments do not have a will of their own. We do not expect anything from them.

I wish to address our friends now. We must not forget our Islamic and religious principles. Our belief, our Koran, and our religion tell us that God is in control of everything in the world. Can anyone stop God from empowering one person to harm another? [sentence as heard] Who can stop God from showing special favor to a slave [servant of God] or a group of slaves? Everything is in God's hand. God controls all the good and the evil in this world. This is an undisputed belief of Islam. Bearing this mind, we must fear God and not the United States.

The United States might say a lot of things, similar to what it has being saying. It might create sensations. It might threaten us with sanctions and other things in the future. Fine! What else can we expect from our enemy? They received blows from Islam. They were humiliated by this system, by this government, and by this Imam [Khomeyni]. They can see that the entire world is surrendering to them, except one place: [Iran], which says: We shall never surrender to America's bullying. [Chants of approval and "Death to America and Israel" from the congregation] Thank you for your slogans of support.

Fine! They are justified in their behavior because they are our enemy. After all, they can see how we are humiliating them. All the rest of the world raises their hands in surrender, but we have clenched our fists [to fight]. It is obvious that the United States becomes angry and resorts to its ultimate might.

Well, faced with such measures, what should we do? Should we soften our approach and indicate that we are not as uncompromising as before? Do you expect us to surrender? Should we demonstrate weakness? This is what they want. They are searching for a weak point upon which to exert all their pressure. What should we do?

We must whole-heartedly, under the banner of our dear and courageous leader [Khamene'i], who is truly the rightful successor to the Imam [Khomeyni] who is buried in this shrine — and may God grant him the same status as the Prophet Muhammad and his companions...[sentence as published] [Jannati pauses] Our leader is following the idol-breaker of the era step by step. On one hand, we have such a leader. On the other hand, we have such a vigilant nation. Our people are so ready for martyrdom. Have you forgotten that our nation fought against the world for eight years? Why should we fear America in the face of our people's resilience, showing how much hardship they can put up with?

We must say: O God, even if the United States were to dominate us, it would be your will that it should dominate us. If that were to happen it would be either because we have committed sins and are paying the price for our sins, or you are testing us and we must pass our test unscathed. This would be the same as the test you gave us during the eight-year war. O God, for as long as we have you, even if the enemy were to dominate us, we would consider it your will. If you

decide, you can repel the enemy, just as you did in Tabas [on 25 April 1980]. God is behind us as demonstrated in the U.S. abortive mission the Iranian desert of Tabas. In Tabas, the desert sands became your army to repel and disgrace the enemy. Your army of sand foiled the enemy's conspiracy while we were asleep and unaware of what was happening. You can do it if you so decide.

We must, therefore, rely on God. We must be afraid of God. We must maintain the same tune against the United States that the Imam [Khomeyni] gave us in his time. We must not be afraid of anyone either. No one can harm the people without God's will and permission. [Shouts of approval from the congregation]

America should understand the slogan of the Iranian people. Anyone who chants a different slogan is not part of us. In my future sermons, I shall speak more about the elections and the line which advocates compromise with America. I hope that the seed sown by our dear Imam [Khomeyni] in the Iranian soil will grow and remain upright, full of blossoms and glory for ever, God willing.

The last part of my sermon is about the New Year celebrations [beginning 20 March 1996]. We have come through another year. We began the sermons late and there is no time to review our record of the past year. However, on the New Year issue I wish to say that a sin is always a sin. One should avoid excesses all the time. You must be charitable and allow the poor to share your good fortune during the New Year. [passage omitted]

I would particularly like to address the state officials. You gentlemen, you the cabinet ministers, you the Majles deputies, and you the managers, you should visit the home of a poor man unannounced. Go and see the poor in their mud houses. Go and closely observe how they live in damp and dark houses. Look at their bare kitchen cupboards. It would be good for you to see how the poor live. One should not always visit the homes of one's peers or those who are better off than oneself. When you see the lifestyle of the poor, you will realize that you should shoulder a burden of responsibility to help them. Such visits will make you think before you waste money for unnecessary things. What can I say about so much money which is wasted? It is all taken from the nation's purse. Why are you doing this? Stop it!

Do not let us go to night parties during the New Year celebrations and stay late, which would prevent us from waking up early to say our morning prayers before sunrise. Such parties make us forget God, the Koran, and our prayers. [passage omitted]

Iran: High Inflation, Misuse of Resources Condemned

LD1603182596 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 11 Mar 96 p 4

[Economic article by Dr. Habib Chini: "Three-figure inflation?"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The head of the Budget and Plan Organization has told a group of students at Tehran University's Economics Department that "if a policy had not been introduced to stabilize the price of foreign currency for exports, there would have been a three-figure inflation rate by the month of Shahrivar" [late summer]. He also claimed that should the present policies and conditions continue, the rate of inflation would be even less than 20 percent next year.

However, inflation is gradually moving toward three figures. Firm measures to control inflation are now are being taken only as a reflex, and unfortunately there seems to be an instrument to solve every problem except that of inflation. Since 11 May — when all transactions were forced to take place through the banking system — inflation has been on the rampage. Latest figures show a 58.2 percent rate of inflation, in comparison to the similar period last year, and it is possible that the figure will go as high as 60 to 70 percent in the last two or three months of the year. The first question that comes to mind is this: The price for the foreign currency allocated to exports has been stabilized but the export of non-oil commodities has fallen by 20 to 25 percent (carpets by 40 percent), and while this policy has been implemented, there has been an unprecedented rate of inflation, so what factors are going to bring down the inflation to less than 20 percent next year?

We are not concerned, for the time being, that inflation exceeding 3 to 4 percent per year is something worth thinking about. What we are discussing, rather, is the fact that the aim of the second five-year plan was to lower the rate of inflation to 12.2 percent. However, in the first year of the plan, the rate of inflation hit 60 percent and, in the words of the head of the Plan and Budget Organization, if the aforementioned policy on foreign exchange had not been implemented, the rate would have reached a three figure amount in the second half of the year.

In the meantime, Dr. Mirzadeh, the head of the Plan and Budget Organization, referred to this essential principle in his remarks: The culture of conserving resources must become so strong in society that it becomes like a source of revenue in annual budgets. This is a point that ABRAR has made repeatedly in its economic column.

There is so much waste in our society that it does not allow the people to enjoy a problem-free existence at a reasonable level. You will probably know that the agriculture minister said recently that 25 percent of agricultural products, especially garden produce, is spoiled before it reaches the market. Every family sees bread wastage on a daily basis. We must turn to housewives in order to learn about amounts of wasted medicine by asking them how much stored medicine which has passed its use-by date they throw away.

In Iran, no-one allows themselves to stick a small note under light switches saying "please turn off the light when you leave." People still leave the taps turned on all the time while taking baths, washing their hands and faces, or brushing their teeth. At social occasions and parties — even very simple family gatherings — the amount of respect shown to the guest has literally come to depend on the amount of fruit and sweets put before them and the leftovers must be thrown away soon afterwards.

In government offices and in private companies and organizations, lights are left on all day. There is waste and thoughtlessness everywhere you look and this is truly cause for regret. Buses and mini-buses leave their engines on regardless of how long they are stopping and, in addition to wasting fuel, they do untold harm to the environment. Engine oil should be changed every 3-5,000 km, but it has become customary in Iran to change it every 1000 km.

These are the most obvious and simple examples. We would sometimes run into astronomical waste if we studied more complicated things. For example, the safety factor component in the building of bridges, tunnels, dams, large scale installations, and high-rises follow precise mathematical calculations and anything in excess of this calculation is wasted. Here, we either build so-called straw huts or we exceed the safety component by such an extent that the weight of the structure itself constitutes a problem and the cost shoots up astronomically. We can almost not think of any case where consumption and the use of resources is at a reasonable level, neither less nor more than what is required.

Complying with reasonable standards or moderation requires education. This education, on the one hand, involves the virtue of making do and, on the other hand, depends on knowing what is reasonable and what is most efficient. Part of this relates to public knowledge and part of it specifically relates to specialists and experts.

The method or model of consumption that we are speaking of is, in fact, a product of knowing what is reasonable and adhering to social justice. In terms of implementation, too, it can be nothing other than knowledge and educational work and, at the same time, moving resources and funds towards accepted models. For example, the government states that it will grant loans and credit to residential buildings measuring between 75 and 100 square meters, that it will not issue building permits for anything smaller, and that it will not grant loans and credit to anything bigger; both so that buildings will not begin to resemble caves and so that people will become persuaded and capable of complying with consumption models. In addition to this there must be constant educational work and advice which, while respecting individual motivation, encourages social activity and discourages excessive love of luxuries.

At any rate, apart from the conservation of resources, production, which we mentioned before, must also be increased. In other words, consumption must be reduced to the most reasonable minimum and production increased to the most reasonable maximum. In this way, we can and we should succeed in curbing inflation. However, this is not something that can be said at the end of this month and achieved at the beginning of the next month. It demands principled short-term, medium-term, and long-term planning. That is, correct planning and correct implementation. Without this, everything that is said remains no more than slogans.

Despite all this, let us hope in these last days of 1374 [Iranian year ending 19 March] that inflation will at least be lower next year than its intolerable level during the current year. God willing.

Iran: Foreign Media 'Ploys' Seen at Rafsanjani News Conference

LD1503184296 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 12 Mar 96 p 2

[Commentary by Hoseyn Shari'atmadari: "Creating an Atmosphere"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Yesterday's interview with the honorable president, conducted by foreign correspondents from well-known world news agencies who had come to Tehran for this purpose, gave a clear exposition of the principled stances of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It also, because of the president's intelligence, robustness and substantiated and logical replies, wiped away the thick layer of distortion which foreign circles and media had spread over the truths and realities of Islamic Iran.

Although all this is cause for pride, one should not be unaware of the subtle approach and dastardly propaganda ploy adopted by foreign news agencies in yesterday's interview. The interview took place after the Fifth Majles elections. Bearing in mind the decisive role of the Majles in the country's future policies, the extensive and awe-inspiring turnout by the people, and the vindictive and extensive foreign propaganda in past weeks, the setting up of the interview yesterday and the stating of irrefutable and palpable truths by the country's highest executive official should be deemed as a fitting and praiseworthy action.

Yet there are indications that in the interview yesterday the Western media correspondents were pursuing a different objective. During yesterday's interview, most of the questions put to the honorable president concerned recent terrorist incidents in occupied Palestine, Iran's (!) role, and other issues relating to the same subject. The Sharm al-Shaykh summit in Egypt is notable, in which U.S. President Bill Clinton, Israeli leaders, and the compromising Arab leaders will participate, and at which the issue of terrorism is supposedly to be debated. The Islamic Republic of Iran, with a deep understanding of the objectives of arrogance at that meeting, boycotted it. In the course of yesterday's interview, foreign correspondents repeatedly put questions about terrorism, Iran's role, etc.... to the president as if they had come to try Iran! They were creating an atmosphere with such dexterity, as if the only issues worth putting to Iranian officials are those related to terrorism! Fortunately the vigilance of the honorable president and his substantiated and logical replies — and even in some cases his pointed questions to those reporters who were trying to create illusions by asking suspicious questions — largely neutralized their ploys.

Unfortunately the ploys by the foreign media representatives at yesterday's interview cannot be assessed as fruitless and totally ineffective. One expects those from our side who are involved in determining the timing of such interviews, particularly interviews with such outstanding personalities as the honorable president, to investigate all aspects, in particular the timing of the interview with regard to other events happening at the time.

To be brief, although the optimism and soundness of those from our side are praiseworthy — and nothing else can be expected of them — the vindictiveness of the enemies and their long-standing enmity and fury must not be overlooked. Yesterday, foreign correspondents easily by-passed one of the greatest events of the region — that is, the proud success of the Islamic Republic of Iran in holding the Fifth Majles elections — and, instead of asking questions about that irrefutable reality, they followed an induced illusion in their questioning.

Iran: Readers, Paper View Legality of Political Parties, Ban on Daily

LD1503174196 Tehran SALAM in Persian
13 Mar p 3

[From the "Opinion Column"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Unidentified caller] I hope they will close your newspaper soon, God willing. It is not clear which alien power is behind you. Stop these deeds for God's sake.

[SALAM] We would be very grateful if this honorable reader could tell us what he means by our "deeds," which have made him so angry.

[Second Caller] It was said before the Majles elections that the Freedom Movement [led by Ebrahim Yazdi] could not put forward candidates because it is not legally registered. Now I would like to ask whether the Militant Clergy Association is itself legal to raise so much hue and cry and break the law in its campaign? Please ask the state authorities whether divine laws should be obeyed by everyone or just by some people.

[SALAM] The Militant Clergy Association considers itself above the law. It considers it below its dignity to ask permission from the law for its campaign. As for the Freedom Movement, in accordance with Article 10 of the law on setting up political parties, this party has violated the law and made itself illegal.

[Third Caller] Please tell us clearly whether it was legal to ban the daily SALAM?

[SALAM] In our editorial entitled "Interview with the prosecutor of the Special Clerical Court," published on Saturday 20 Esfand [9 March], we explained that, in accordance with the press law, the ban was not justified. The Special Clerical Court prosecutor has not explained why and in accordance with which article of the press law the daily was banned.

Iran: SALAM Answers Callers' Questions

NC1803112396 Tehran SALAM in Persian
11 Mar 96 p 9

[From the "Hello SALAM" column—ellipses as published]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Unidentified caller] The officials should answer, please, why Iraq—with all the devastations and the fact that it is a country that exports only one product—the value of its national currency suddenly falls from 3,000 dinars to a dollar to 450 dinars to a dollar, while in our country—with all its blessings—there is so much poverty and deprivation. Why should bus fares in Iraq drop 50 percent from 1,300 dinars to

700 dinars, while in our country prices are constantly soaring?

[SALAM] The value of the dinar suddenly increased because of Iraq's talks with the United Nations over the sale of oil. This was mostly psychological, in the same way that the value of the Iranian rial also increased immediately after the acceptance of [UN Security Council] Resolution 598.

As for this dear reader and his arguments and claims that "in our country, with all its blessings, there is so much poverty and deprivation," we should admit that this is not the case. Taking the student population as an example, our student population is equivalent to the total population of Iraq, and at least 98 percent of our students receive free education. There are an acceptable level of health, transportation, electricity, and other services in our country and, in comparison with our neighbors, we have no shortages in these areas. The protests in our society are not against "poverty and deprivation" but against the absence of a just distribution of incomes and potentials. And this is what has led to the poverty and deprivation of some in the country. Our country is rich both in natural resources and in expert and trained manpower, as well as in its geographic position, its extensive territory, and its population. Also, it is considered to be one of the most powerful countries in the region. We can never compare Iran with Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey, and....

[Unidentified called] The esteemed head of ... had stated in an interview during the past term: "Our sole problem is culture." I would like to say: Mr. ..., I don't think that our people—with a three- or four-year cultural background [as published]—have a cultural problem. All the cultural problems go back to the country's economic and political problems, which stem from the inefficiency of the representatives in various affairs of the country.

I would like you to explain further to the Iranian people what you mean by culture and what problem the people are facing in this field. In another place, Mr. ... stated: "Whoever has exerted more efforts for the revolution enjoys a bigger share." The esteemed head of ... should look at history a little more carefully. He should look at the Nahj al-Balaghah, which states: When the brother of Imam 'Ali, peace be upon him, went to 'Ali to ask for a bigger share of the nation's wealth, 'Ali reminded him of the final day, even though his brother was the one who had worked the most for Islam. Why didn't 'Ali want to give his brother a larger share? All the sectors in Iran and the entire Iranian nation have strived for the victory of the revolution. Some went to the fronts, and others helped from behind the fronts. Then how can you say that only a few strived for the revolution? You cannot monopolize the revolution for a few.

[SALAM] If the reader who has cited someone does not say which newspaper published these remarks, we cannot refer to them and see whether they have been correctly cited. There have been many cases where remarks have been attributed to certain officials, but when we examined the issue, we ascertained that things were different and that altering even one word had changed the entire meaning. Therefore, inaccurate and undocumented quotes always create a dilemma: If we publish them, we will not be sure that they are correct; and if we don't publish them, we will have hurt the feelings of the person who has asked the question. Thus, we would like to ask that remarks be cited accurately or that the details about the newspaper in which these remarks were published be given.

[Unidentified caller] If the Afghan Government lacks any kind of popular support and uses the money of some to deceive others, and is striving to maintain its existence by relying on former communist forces and on Russian and Indian arms and is a legal government, and—on the contrary—the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran which relies on the people and Islam is declared to be an illegal government, I—as an Afghan refugee and a reader of SALAM who have witnessed the developments in Afghanistan up close—ask that the politicians in the Islamic Republic of Iran not make any decisions on Afghanistan on the basis of wrong information and review their decision on considering an illegitimate and un-Islamic government to be legal. This newly-emerged government has proven that it is the enemy of the people of Afghanistan, and recognition of this government is tantamount to treason against the Afghans.

[SALAM] Unfortunately one of Afghanistan's problems is the group and ethnic outlooks that rule its people and groups, so much so that each person or group looks at Afghanistan's domestic issues and problems from its own point of view. This dear reader considers the current government in Afghanistan to be illegitimate and un-Islamic, while many others consider it to be legitimate and Islamic. Therefore, no conclusion can be drawn from such outlooks.

What could become the basis for achieving a basic solution to Afghanistan's domestic problems is for each person and group to stop regarding issues from their point of view and to start relying on national unity and interests, to start considering all the Afghan citizens as having equal rights, and to accept the government that is brought to power by the people's votes.

Unfortunately, what has blocked a solution to Afghanistan's domestic problems until now is that no group believes in the people's votes and each seeks its own interests. The current government will be recognized until the time when a government that is elected by the people comes to power in Afghanistan. And it is not as though this government is the enemy of Afghanistan and ... [passage omitted]

[Unidentified caller] One of the major elements that led to the revolution was injustice and its manifestations, such as the feudal lords and the khans. But now in our Islamic country—in Marvdasht— there are dozens of feudal lords each with at least 500 hectares of land. And each year, instead of investing the money from their harvests in the country's reconstruction, they spend it in America and Europe. Is it justice when the income for one day for these callous people is equivalent to the annual income of many of the people?

[No answer is given by SALAM]

[Unidentified caller] One of the founders of the Freedom Movement of Iran [FMI] was the late Ayatollah Taleqani. Please explain to us whether if he were still alive, you would still declare the FMI illegal without any logical reason.

[SALAM] If Ayatollah Taleqani were still alive, the FMI would definitely not have adopted the stands it has, which led it to be declared illegal. Of course, we do not have precise information on whether the late Ayatollah Taleqani was a member of the FMI or not.

[Unidentified caller] I would like to ask whether the credentials of any of the candidates from the traditional right were also rejected or not.

[SALAM] Yes.

Pakistan

Pakistan: U.S. Adviser's Remarks on Military Intervention Criticized

BK1603164196 Rawalpindi JANG in Urdu 16 Mar 96 p 10

[Editorial: "Peculiar U.S. Concept on Protecting Democracy and Eliminating Terrorism"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In an address at George Washington University, Anthony Lake, adviser to U.S. President Clinton for national security affairs, has said that the United States might intervene anywhere militarily to protect democracy and combat terrorism. The United States, he said, will use force wherever necessary in its national interests, adding that the use of force will remain a key element in international relations until human nature changes. He said: We definitely will intervene when we see that a military mission is more profitable than the cost involved.

The views expressed in this speech by the U.S. presidential adviser on national security affairs indicate that, despite achieving lofty heights in the field of education and becoming the world's sole superpower, the United States has not yet been able to shun the concept that might is right and that its forceful and attractive slogan-mongering for the causes of human rights, freedom, democracy, and equality is only a sham. Obviously, if the United States will launch a military invasion anywhere and against any country if it is more profitable than the cost of the invasion, the real intention behind its attractive and appealing slogans is to amass as much wealth as possible through the use of force.

If the United States is really pursuing this objective, and if its war against Iraq, its support for the Serb beasts in Bosnia, its conspiracies against Iran, and its latest attempt to intimidate China over the Taiwan issue by dispatching its nuclear submarines to the region are part of its efforts to realize this objective, then the United States should know that it might be in a position today to intervene militarily in a country to fulfill its objective by declaring that country to be antidemocratic or a terrorist state. A power may emerge tomorrow, however, that will be more powerful than the United States, and then it will use the same language of force that the United States knows and better understands. Given this situation, the United States must refrain from pursuing its objectives under the pretense of waging a war against terrorism; otherwise, the same weapon might be tried against it in the future.

Pakistan: Defense Minister Rules Out War With India

BK1603143796 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] An official delegation led by the federal defense production secretary is to visit United States in the first week of next month to review the progress on F-16's and other concerned matters. This was stated by the defense minister, Mr. Aftab Shaban Mirani, while talking to newsmen in Karachi today. He ruled out the possibility of war with India, but said Pakistan is keeping a close watch on the situation and is fully alert to meet any eventuality. The minister said the situation in Kashmir is tense and Pakistan had reported all violations by the Indian forces along the Line of Control to the United Nations observers.

Pakistan: Mirani Comments on Possibility of War With India

BK1703121796 Islamabad THE NATION in English 17 Mar 96 pp 1, 11

[Report by THE NATION correspondent]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi — Defence Minister, Aftab Shaban Mirani did not see any war threat from India as it was the "election year" in the neighbouring country.

He was talking to journalists at ASF [Airport Security Force] Headquarters after viewing the passing out parade Saturday morning.

He said though the situation in Kashmir is tense but war is an expensive as well as destructive and nobody would like to indulge in such adventurism.

When asked India is provoking Pakistan for war, Mirani said Pakistan is not provoked but added that we are alert and closely monitoring the situation. He further said that every Indian move is being closely watched by UN observation team.

Replying to a question he said situation on the borders is peaceful and there is no danger of war. However, he said as "our side on the Line of Control is populated, we have to depopulate at least 5 km area to shift the people to safer places.

Regarding increase in "defence budget" he replied that it was being evaluated but no decision has yet been taken so far.

About sudden change of PIA MD [Pakistan International Airlines Managing Director] he said that it was not a political change but as the tenure of Umer Farooq had expired on March 7, Prime Minister wanted to replace him with a better person. He further said Mr Tiwana was a former PIA chief and the government had decided to bring him back so that the functioning of the National Airline could be improved.

On the question of adding new fleet to PIA, he said the matter was under consideration. However, he disclosed the government in principle has decided to close down 11 out of the 39 stations in order to cut the expenditure.

On Pakistan's support to China on Taiwan issue Mirani said the US has taken strong exception and might delay payment on F-16s. He said that a team led by Mazhar Rafi will be visiting Washington on April 2 and 3 for reviewing the progress on F-16s and other affairs.

He also assured that the needs of ASF will be sympathetically considered when their demands are received. However, he said with the levy of security charges things will surely improve. ASF Commander Brig Rashid A Malik present on the occasion added that with levying of 15 to 20 crores will be added to ASF income yearly.

While addressing the passing out parade of Airport Security Force (ASF) at ASF Camp Saturday morning Aftab Shaban Mirani, Federal Minister for Defence, has said that the enemies of Pakistan are bent upon spoiling the current spell of peace and tranquility by creating terror and panic among the people. He said law and order situation in Karachi has become so serious that every inhabitant of the City is scared and confused but added that by the grace of God and with tireless efforts of law enforcing agencies a sense of security is gradually returning to the citizens. He applauded the major contribution made by the Airport Security Force in restoring peace.

Earlier, the Minister viewed the passing out parade with Force Commander Brig Rashid Malik. Later the oath-taking ceremony along with the prize distribution was held at the camp.

He said that no act of terrorism has been committed against aviation industry recently any where in Pakistan which is an achievement because the Airport Security Force (ASF) was organised to provide maximum security to aviation industry.

Appreciating the performance of the ASF he said that the force has proved its worth in providing security to all airlines operating at airports in Pakistan and ensuring flight security to all airlines through highly-trained airguards.

In order to enhance the administrative set up and operational efficiency of ASF, he disclosed that all the 39 airports in the country have been divided in five zones — one each in a province and Federal area. He further said that senior officers have been appointed as commanders of provincial zones. With this new set up, he said, the command at various level has been streamlined.

The performance of Airports Security Force, he said is judged at the international level, all officers and members of ASF will have to maintain a very high level of discipline. With this in mind he said the force was placed under the military law in August 1984. He said to make this more effective an amendment was passed by both Houses of the Parliament whereby punishment meted out under the military law was questioned by the civil courts. The new act does not allow this, thus contributing to improve discipline. The nation he said has reposed great confidence in every member of ASF and it is for them to come up to the expectations of the nation, this can only be possible only when ASF men work with selfless devotion and dedication, he observed.

He also assured that government is making every possible efforts to improve the working conditions of ASF, in this context government has decided to levy very nominal security charges as of March 1996 which will enable ASF to over come its financial difficulties in the procurement of improved electronic equipment and other essential commodities, he believed.

He recalled two major incidents in which ASF displayed high sense of responsibility and excellent performance; one in April 1995 when some PIA employees along with ASF airguards were kidnapped while on their way from Mohenjodaro to Larkana. He said two members of ASF not only bravely escaped from the clutches of the terrorists but also rescued other kidnappees after almost three and a half months captivity. The other incident he said occurred in August 1995. Two criminals assaulted Mr Ilyas Jat, MNA [member of National Assembly] on flight from Islamabad to Lahore. Two ASF guards professionally reacted and killed both the assailants without causing any damage to passengers or the aircraft saving the life of the MNA. This has been eulogised both at home and abroad.

He said safeguarding of airports against air piracy and terrorism is a sacred task entrusted to the ASF and hoped that they will accept the challenge and frustrate all evil designs of the terrorists. Earlier, he congratulated all for successful completion of their training and for deciding to enter the noble profession.

Pakistan: National Assembly Told India Preparing for Nuclear Test

BK1703084796 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The National Assembly was informed this morning that Pakistan has received credible reports indicating that India was preparing to conduct a nuclear test at Pokaran in Thar desert. The parliamentary secretary for foreign affairs, Mr. George Clement, assured the house that Pakistan will take all appropriate steps in response to any qualitative escalation of threats to its security.

Replying to a question by Mr. Muzaffar Ahmad Hashemi, he said Pakistan has urged permanent members of the Security Council to dissuade India from nuclear testing.

The house has now been adjourned to meet again tomorrow afternoon.

Pakistan: More on Report to National Assembly on Indian Nuclear Test

BK1703143896 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The National Assembly was assured today that Pakistan would take appropriate measures to effectively counter the threat posed to its security by the Indian plans to conduct another nuclear test. The parliamentary secretary for foreign affairs, Mr. George Clement, informed the house that Pakistan has received credible reports indicating preparations by India to conduct a nuclear test at Pokaran in the Indian side of Thar desert. He said Pakistan is fully alive to these developments and believes that another nuclear test by India will constitute a serious setback to nonproliferation efforts globally and regionally and destabilize peace and security in South Asia. It will also have grave implications on conclusion of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Mr. George Clement said Pakistan has shared its concerns with the international community, especially the permanent members of the Security Council, urging them to dissuade India from this disastrous path. He said it is imperative that the international community realizes the threats to peace and security posed by the Indian unbridled nuclear and ballistic missile ambition.

Speaking on a point of order raised by Chaudhary Nissar Ali Khan, the minister of state for law and justice, Mr. Raza Rabbani, said the increase in the prices of diesel are the result of slight price adjustment to keep up par with the international prices of petroleum. He refuted the opposition's allegation that the government had enhanced the price of diesel, whereas there was no increase in the international market. He said the minister of finance will make a detailed statement tomorrow in the house. The National Assembly will now meet tomorrow afternoon.

Pakistan: PPP Senator Responds to AI Report on Human Rights

BK1603112796 Peshawar THE FRONTIER POST in English 16 Mar 96 p 12

[APP report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — The recently issued report by the Amnesty International (AI), on the Human Rights situation in Pakistan, mirrors one sided picture in favour of Altaf group, despite its terrorist activities in Karachi.

This was stated in a rejoinder to the AI, by the Incharge Human Rights Affairs of PPP, Senator Iqbal Haider here on Friday.

The rejoinder said, "The AI report generally tilts in favour of Altaf group, with the inaccurate portrayal of facts, entitled 'Political context of human rights abuses in Karachi', goes in favour of Altaf group."

"In the report, the government of Pakistan has been asked to condemn human rights violations, tortures and extra-judicial killings, whereas, Altaf group has not been asked to renounce terrorism in categorical terms by surrendering arms and terrorists." The rejoinder said, there is no mention of Altaf group run torture cells. The acts of terrorism by Altaf group have not been adequately condemned by AI in its report, which could be seen as the condonation of group's terrorist activities, it added.

The rejoinder counted the steps taken by the government to ensure the protection of human rights. These steps are, the establishment of Human Rights Ministry, the strengthening of the judicial process in the investigation of violations, commitment to the spirit of democracy, rule of law and freedom of expression besides independence of judiciary.

The government has categorically condemned all forms of human rights violations and the functionaries guilty of any rights violation will be prosecuted.

It rejected the claim of AI report that the violence in Karachi was of political nature. The government had always expressed its readiness for political dialogue. However, the government would not compromise on the acts of terrorism, it added.

It said the abuse of authority by the law enforcing personnel has been strictly addressed by the senior officers. In this regard it said, even in 1996, 18 personnel were sent on compulsory retirement, it added. A total of 138 police officials were being severely dealt with under the department rules. While 503 have either been dismissed or removed from the service, it further stated.

The rejoinder termed the reports incorrect that the police have been allowed to shoot the terrorists on sight. Terrorists were shot only when they opened fire on the police. During 1995 about 230 personnel of police were killed by the terrorists in Karachi. Scores of terrorists involved in assault on police were facing trials in courts, it added.

It explained that Altaf group was not asked by the army for boycotting the general elections 1993. In fact Altaf group demanded of the interim government of Moeen Qureshi for the withdrawal of all criminal cases against its workers. When Altaf group realised the futility of boycotting the elections of the National Assembly, it opted to take part in the provincial assembly elections, it added.

The rejoinder said that the Altaf group as a policy avoided judicial forums, enquiry or trial. Consistent with this policy Altaf Hussain demanded the dissolution of the commission of enquiry instituted to investigate in the incident of Pacca Oila. Actually Altaf group intentionally refused to appear in any enquiry as it feared that its false propaganda will be exposed.

The rejoinder also said that Altaf group is not a political party. It never contested previous elections under this name nor it ever submitted its accounts to the election commission of Pakistan, obligatory on all political parties. In 1988 it contested elections under the name of "Haq Parasts". Even the Haq Parast Group, is not a political party, as it does not fulfill the requisites of party under the Political Parties Act, it added.

Pakistan: Kashmir Issue To Be Raised at UN Commission Geneva Session

BK1703154896 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has decided to raise Kashmir issue at the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva at its session beginning tomorrow. This was announced by Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali while briefing members of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir legislative assembly and the Jammu and Kashmir Council in Muzaffarabad today. He condemned Indian atrocities against the Kashmiri people and declared that no amount of pressure and brutalities could crush the struggle of the Kashmiri people for attaining their right of self-determination. He said Kashmiri people will never accept any other solution to the Kashmir issue.

The foreign minister also expressed deep concern over the murderous attacks on the leaders of All Parties Hurriyat Conference and the arrest of the lawyer of human rights mission, Mr. Jalil Andrabi.

Referring to the so-called talks by the renegade Kashmiri leaders with the Indian Government, he said these talks could not serve any purpose as these have been condemned by the All Parties Hurriyat Conference and other Kashmiri leaders. He condemned the indiscriminate firing by Indian forces from across the Line of Control. He said India had also started erecting barbed wire to convert the control line into a permanent one, but Pakistan would not allow it. The foreign minister declared that Pakistan is a peace-loving country and wants a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir issue. He said Pakistan does not want war, but if it is imposed, the valiant armed forces were fully prepared to defend the motherland.

Referring to the arms buildup by India and its missile program, he said it has disturbed the balance of power in the region and posed a serious threat to many countries.

Pakistan: Foreign Office Spokesman Views Kashmir, Afghanistan

BK1503131896 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 15 Mar 96 pp 1, 9

[Report by Aroosa Alam]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, March 14 — Reiterating its adherence to "One China" policy, Pakistan has urged Washington and Beijing to base their relationship within the parameters of three communiques signed between the two countries under which the United States has accepted the principle of 'One China'.

Explaining Pakistan's position over recent tension between China and the United States over Taiwan, a Foreign Office spokesman told a news briefing here Thursday that Pakistan fully respected the principle of sovereignty of states. He said Pakistan adhered to the policy of One China. He said "our friendship with China is traditional and time-tested one and we also have friendship with the United States". The spokesman pointed out that the United States had accepted the principle of One China in three communiques signed with Beijing.

Tension between the United States and China heated up following military exercises by China in Taiwanese Straits and the United States moving its naval ships including two aircraft carriers in the area. Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, military generals and foreign ministry spokesman have warned the United States not to interfere in the internal affairs of China.

The spokesman hoped that the two countries would base their relationship within the parameters of three communiques.

The spokesman described proposed talks between Indian government and four so-called Kashmiri leaders as nothing but an exercise to mislead the international opinion about real problem being faced by the people of Indian-held Kashmir.

Reacting to reports appearing in the press that four Kashmiri leaders have announced on Wednesday to hold their first direct talks with Indian government on resolving the conflict, the spokesman said these renegade Kashmiri leaders had no locus standi in negotiating the Kashmir dispute with the Indian government.

He pointed out that the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, [APHC] the true representative body of the Kashmiri people had declared that these Indian stooges had no right to talk on behalf of the people of Kashmir. They did not enjoy support of the people.

The spokesman said Indian Home Minister SB Chavan's reported acceptance of the talks offer by these renegade Kashmiri leaders was an attempt to divert attention from the real problem. He said the people of Kashmir had been struggling for their inalienable right of self-determination as pledged by the United Nations.

The spokesman expressed grave concern over disappearance of a senior advocate and human rights activist Jalil Andrabi who was reportedly arrested by Indian security forces. Appreciating Amnesty International for demanding unconditional release of Jalil Andrabi, he expressed the hope that other international human rights organisations would also urge the Indian government to give up harassing APHC leaders and its supporters.

To a question the spokesman said Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali's visit to Tashkent was part of a series of contact with neighbouring countries to apprise each other about latest situation in Afghanistan.

He said both Pakistan and Uzbekistan agreed that there should be a broad-based government in Afghanistan representing all shades of opinions.

To another question he said Pakistan and Iran enjoyed close relationship and they were in constant consultations with each other on Afghanistan issue.

Replying to a number of questions, the spokesman confirmed that the Foreign Office had no prior knowledge of an agreement signed between Pakistan and Egypt. He said Foreign Ministry was aware that there was an agreement to be signed but it knew nothing about its final shape or the details.

He said that Interior Minister's visit to Egypt, was part of the ongoing high-level exchange of views between the two countries. The Minister briefed Egyptian leaders about Kashmir issue, Afghanistan and security environment [words indistinct] speculations that there would be delay in the delivery of military equipment to Pakistan by the United States under Brown Amendment, the spokesman said the American administration had not yet taken any decision one way or the other. He said it was a fact that the press in the United States had been fed with distorted information reportedly based on intelligence sources about ring magnets.

Expressing solidarity of Pakistan with Lebanese people who are observing Thursday the International Lebanese day to protest against the occupation of Lebanese territories by Israeli forces the same day in 1978, the spokesman reiterated Pakistan's principled position that restoration of the Lebanese solidarity was one of the fundamental prerequisites for achieving comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. He said Pakistan joined the international community that the issue would be resolved in accordance with the UN resolution which called for withdrawal of Israeli occupation'forces from Lebanese territory.

PPI adds: The spokesman declined to comment on the reported Iranian-Afghan plan to airlift 6000 soldiers to Kabul for an attack on Herat but said "this is all hypothetical".

He said Pakistan enjoyed excellent relations with [words indistinct] that both the countries were in constant touch with each other on the Afghan issue.

Asked if Pakistan was reviewing afresh the Afghan transit trade, he said it had always been constantly under review.

Pakistan: Ali Rules Out Talks With India if Kashmir Not on Agenda

BK1703104996 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The foreign minister, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, has said that Pakistan is following a clear policy on Kashmir, in line with international principles for giving the Kashmiri people their right of self-determination in accordance with the UN resolutions. Talking to our representative in Muzaffarabad today, he underlined the need to allow the Kashmiri people to decide their future through an impartial plebiscite.

About holding talks with India, the foreign minister pointed out that any talks will remain meaningless without including the Kashmir issue on top of the agenda. India will have to stop the repression in occupied Kashmir in order to create conditions for such talks. He paid rich tributes to the people of Kashmir for their heroic struggle for their right of self-determination. He said the Kashmiris are not alone in this struggle. The people and government of Pakistan are with them in this hour of trial.

Turning to the talks of so-called some Kashmiri leaders with India, he pointed out that New Delhi cannot get anything from such talks.

Pakistan: Commentary Calls Indian Kashmir Talks 'Drama'

BK1703124996 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 16 Mar 96

[Commentary by Ashraf Ansari]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Talks between India and the four so-called Kashmiri leaders in New Delhi are being widely condemned. Reacting to talks being staged by India with the stooge Kashmiri leaders, a Foreign Office spokesman in Islamabad pointed out to the futility of the so-called dialogue. He said these talks were nothing but an exercise to mislead the international opinion. The exercise was meant to cover up the real problem faced by the Kashmiris and particularly the people of Indian-held Kashmir.

Pakistan's spokesman said the four renegade Kashmiri leaders have no locus standi in negotiating the Kashmir dispute with the Indian Government. He pointed out that the All Parties Hurriyat Conference headed by Mir Waiz Omar Farooq was the only true representative body of the Kashmiri people, and they have also declared that these Indian stooges had no right to talk on behalf of the people of Kashmir. These Indian-picked Kashmiri leaders do not enjoy the support of the people of the dispute state.

The chairman of the Huriiyat Conference, Mir Waiz Omar Farooq, described the four so-called Kashmiri leaders as rejected leaders. He said the talks were all hoax and meaningless and could lead to nothing. Other prominent Kashmiri leaders have also condemned the Indian Kashmir talks drama.

The first meeting in New Delhi between the four so-called Kashmiri leaders and Indian Home Minister S.B. Chavan was marked by complete general strike in occupied Kahsmir. On the one hand, India has picked four Kashmiri stooges to join it in talks on Kashmir, and on the other its agents make attempts to the life of genuine Kashmiri leaders. India is also trying to bring disrepute to the leaders of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference.

In the Indian-held Kashmir, the authorities have served notices on 42 Kashmiri leaders under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act 1976. Various Kashmiri groups associated with the Hurriyat Conference have also been issued such notices to bring pressure on them. These notices call upon the Kashmiri groups and leaders to explain sources of foreign contributions. The Kashmiri leaders have categorically rejected the Indian allegation and termed it a conspiracy against the ongoing indigenous struggle of the Kashmiris for the exercise of their right to self-determination.

India seems to have resorted to holding Kashmir talks drama out of its desperation. India has failed in wooing the genuine Kashmiri leaders to enter into dialogue with it on the lingering crisis in the disputed state. The Indian attempt has been to appease angry Kashmiris by offering them some sort of internal autonomy. Genuine Kashmiri leaders have always rejected such Indian offers. They said the current struggle is not for internal autonomy within Indian fold, it is rather for the exercise of their right to self- determination. The Kasmiris are entitled to this right under the international law.

The UN resolutions on Kashmir promise the holding of plebiscite in the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir to finally decide its future political status. India, who had accepted these resolutions along with Pakistan, now refuses to implement them fearing the Kashmiris would never opt for it. The current struggle of the people in held Kashmir resulted from their desperation, as they had waited for years to see New Delhi move towards holding the promised plebiscite.

India is under tremendous international pressure to end suppression of the Kashmiris demanding their right to self- determination. India apparently seeks some kind of legitimacy for its hold on Kashmir. However, it conveniently forgets that its past efforts in this regard had failed, and the Kashmiri masses would never give up their right to decide the accession of the disputed state through UN-supervised plebiscite. India should not ignore the realities of Kashmir and hold meaningful dialogue with Pakistan on the subject. The two countries are bound by UN resolutions to join hands in holding of plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir. India's current talks drama would be of no avail to India. It would not help resolve the Kashmir problem either.

Pakistan: Bhutto Rules Out Compromise With Altaf Group 'Terrorists'

BK1703154696 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said her government will not compromise on terrorism, and the Altaf Group should renounce terrorist activities, surrender arms and terrorists, and hold talks if they are interested in resolving political issues and problems of people in urban Sindh. She was addressing the members of PPP [Pakistan People's Party] Sindh Council at the newly set up central secretariat of the party in Karachi today. The prime minister presided over the meeting of the council. She pointed out that her government was serving the people of Karachi without any discrimination and lauded efforts of Karachites for fighting terrorism and supporting the efforts of the government for the restoration of peace.

Turning to the problems of the people of Karachi, the prime minister referred to the special package of 210 billion rupees and said that all big development schemes and projects were conceived and implemented by the PPP government. The prime minister lauded the sacrifices and courage of the PPP workers who faced terrorism but did not leave their homes and offices. She briefed the Sindh PPP Council members about the remarkable improvement in the overall law and order situation in the urban and rural areas of Sindh Province. Ms. Benazir Bhutto asked them to solve the problems of the oppressed working class in their respective areas and ensure that no injustice was done to them.

The prime minister also told the council that, as a result of the economic and financial measures adopted by her government, there has been an unprecedented reduction in the budget deficit, and it will hopefully be less than 5 percent in June this year.

The central information secretary of the party, Senator Iqbal Haider, and the Sindh PPP chief, Syed Qaim Ali Shah, told newsmen that the prime minister spoke of the remarkable decrease in the inflation and the stability in prices in the country. She highlighted the substantial increase in the exports in recent months which, she said, has improved Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves. Ms. Benazir Bhutto underscored the achievements in the agriculture sector, which has resulted in a very high yield of cotton, rice, and wheat crops, as well as on other agricultural produce, thereby giving a new boost to the economy of the country. The prime minister said that a number of power projects were nearing completion in various parts of the country to get rid of load shedding. She said the government was giving emphasis on ensuring expeditious implementation of the development schemes and projects in the social sector in order to provide better civic amenities and basic necessities of life.

The prime minister also explained to the Sindh PPP council members the electoral reforms announced recently by her government. These reforms were hailed by the members of the council.

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